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ALL AROUND

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DICK GORDON.

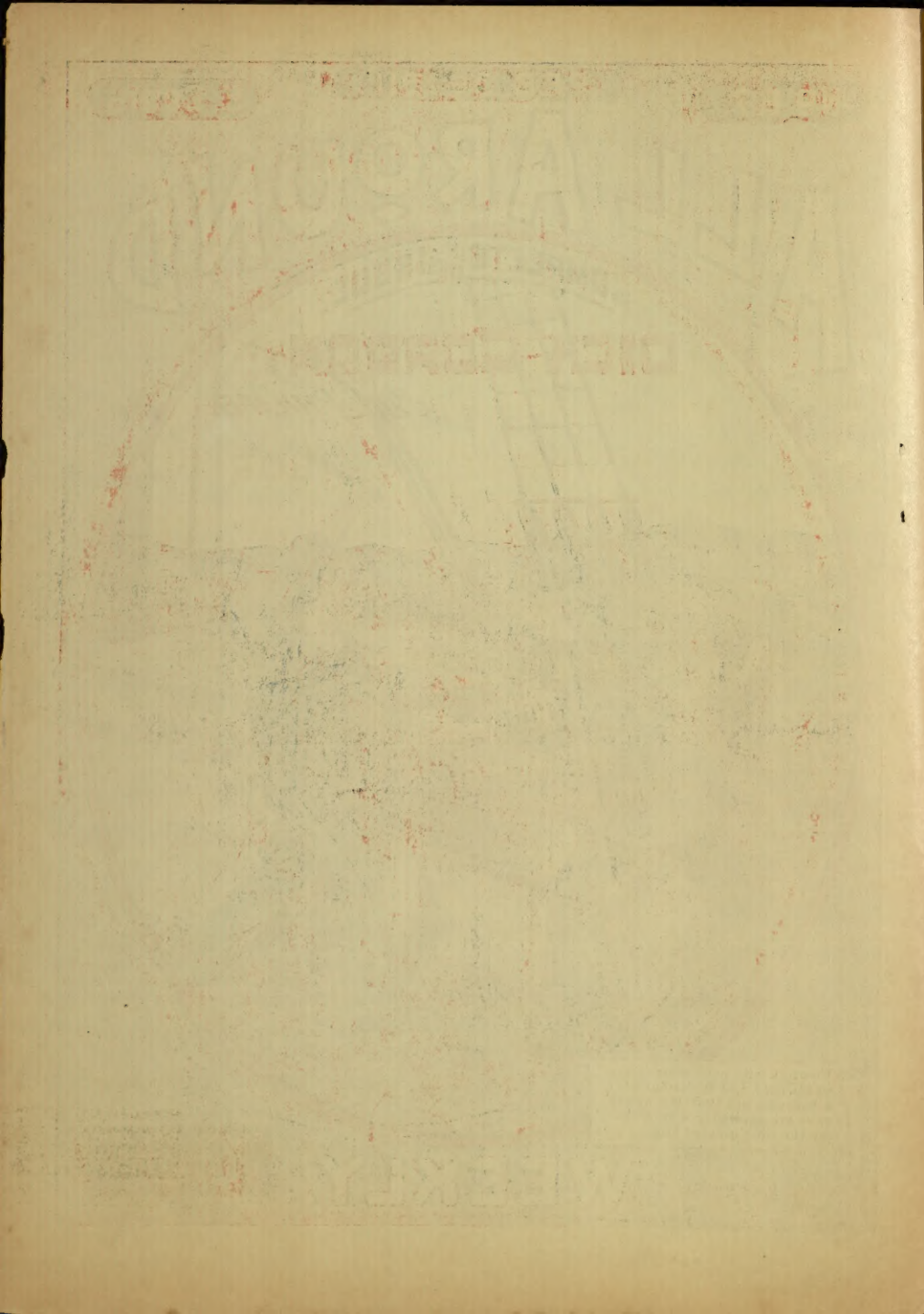
BILL PHILIPS.



Howling with pain, Scott released his hold, and Dick, snatching a belaying-pin that lay handy, gave his adversary a blow that, for the time, quieted him.

WEEKLY.

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ALL AROUND WEEKLY

CONTAINING STORIES OF ALL KINDS

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DICK GORDON

OR,

THE TRUE YANKEE SAILOR BOY

By L. PHILIPS

CHAPTER I.

"TURN HIM OUT."

"Yes, my dear, you had better turn him out at once," said Mrs. Harefield to her husband. "We can't be bothered with other people's children."

At the time the good lady uttered these words the dark, starless sky was discharging a copious supply of mingled rain and fog, so that the prospects of "him"—the person to be turned out—were not very cheerful, unless he could obtain some other shelter.

However, this did not seem to trouble Mr. or Mrs. Harefield the least.

The gentleman arose from his easy-chair before the drawing-room fire and proceeded to the back kitchen, where the feeble light of a tallow candle fell upon the figure of a boy about fourteen years of age—a fine, handsome young fellow.

"Come, young fellow," said Mr. Harefield, "haven't you found yourself some other lodgings yet?"

"No."

"Then you must do so at once."

"Why should I? This house is mine."

"No, Richard, it is mine. Your father mortgaged it and now it is mine—legally. So you must turn out."

"When?"

"Now."

"But, Mr. Harefield, it is raining."

"Button your jacket, then."

"I can't go to-night."

Mr. Harefield's answer was to seize Richard Gordon by the collar and drag him away.

Richard struggled.

But Harefield was a powerful man, and in a few minutes our hero found himself on the front step.

"You have no money, I suppose, Richard," said Mr. Harefield, when he had accomplished that much of his object, "so here is half a dollar for you. That is quite gen-

erous on my part, I think, after all the trouble I have had with you. Good night, Richard. Try and get some work in the morning."

So saying, he re-entered the house and fastened the door.

But ere he could resume his seat by the fire, the coin he had thrust into Richard's hand came crashing through the brightly lighted drawing-room window, and after smashing one of the globes on the chandelier alighted on the rug, just where Mr. Harefield's feet had rested.

"He's an ungrateful boy," said the man, when his wife explained what had happened, "but I don't think it would do to give him in custody for breaking the window. We have got rid of him, and it is not likely he will trouble us any more."

"I hope not, indeed," said the lady, tossing her head, and looking ruefully at the broken fragments of glass on the carpet.

Meanwhile, our hero wandered on till he reached the end of the street, when he sat down to consider which way he should go and what he should do.

This was no easy matter for Richard Gordon to decide.

He had been sitting for some time regardless of the damp atmosphere, which was rapidly assuming the form of a most decided downpour of rain, when a heavy hand was laid on his head.

"Now then, boy," said the owner of the hand, a member of the metropolitan police, "you can't stop here. Move on!"

And he added, as he noticed that the boy was respectably attired:

"You had better make haste home for it will be a drenching night."

The word "home" filled Richard's heart with strange feelings, for he now began to realize the fact that he was homeless.

However, in obedience to the policeman's word, Richard rose to his feet and walked away, but still, occupied with his own thoughts, took little heed of the direction in which he was going.

At length he found himself in a neighborhood to which he was a total stranger.

It was near the river, as it seemed, for occasionally in spite of the obscurity he could see a tall mast or two betokening the presence of shipping.

The people, too, were maritime in their appearance.

He stopped to take a good look around.

The street was almost deserted.

Only a few people stood at the doorways of their half-closed shops, or gutter-prowlers hurried away to seek shelter in their dens.

Some distance ahead was a burly-looking sailor in blue jacket and trousers, staggering along under the influence of a full cargo of rum.

He rolled about from starboard to port, but evidently had no intention of bringing up at any of the gin-shops with which the neighborhood abounded.

Presently two ill-looking ruffians pounced out of a doorway and attacked the seaman, who for a moment was taken aback by the sudden onslaught.

One of the ruffians, getting behind, placed his arm around the sailor's throat, squeezing so tightly as nearly to strangle him, while the other endeavored to rifle his pockets.

As soon as Richard Gordon saw their intention, he rushed forward to give all the assistance in his power.

The sailor, partly sobered by the thought of his danger, was struggling desperately.

But his enemies had taken him at such a disadvantage that they would have succeeded in their attempt but for Richard.

Our young hero, on reaching the scene of action, leaped upon the man who had his arm around the sailor's neck, and served him in the same manner.

This quickly caused the ruffian to loosen his hold, and the old tar then gave the other a fearful blow in the face, which caused him to turn about and run with all the speed of which his legs were capable.

Richard Gordon had been struggling desperately with the other ruffian, and had received one or two severe bruises.

But now the villain saw that he ran a great chance of his being captured, and slipped away after his companion.

"My eyes! that was a near touch!" exclaimed the man. "Tip up your fin, my lad."

Richard extended his hand, and the tar, greatly wondering at the softness of the palm he held in his own hard fingers, looked at the youth.

"Blest if you ain't a regular gentleman, though."

"Yes," replied Richard.

"And what might you be a-cruising about these here latitudes for, young gentleman?"

Richard made no answer to this question.

"Cos it ain't safe quarters for anybody as got any wally-able property about 'em."

"I have nothing, except the clothes I wear."

"No home?"

Richard shook his head.

"Well, I'm jiggered!"

The old sailor scratched his head vigorously, but failing to produce an idea by that species of hand cultivation, inquired:

"What are you gong to do, then?"

"I don't know."

"No relations?"

"Not that I am acquainted with."

"Father and mother?"

The old sailor's normally rough voice became quite soft and musical as he muttered those words.

"Both dead," responded Richard Gordon, with a deep sigh.

"I ought to ha' knowed that by your not havin' your home," the man muttered. "Well, my boy, give us your flipper again; so long as Tom Trenail is on shore he sticks to you. Come along; any port in a storm."

Richard Gordon, though young, was an acute observer of the human countenance, and that of Tom Trenail struck him as being perfectly good-natured and honest, even if a trifle rough and unpolished.

So Richard turned up the collar of his jacket and walked along with his new friend, thinking all the time that perhaps, through Tom's good offices, he might obtain a berth on board some ship; for he fully realized the fact that he had to work for his own living.

Presently he propounded the idea to Tom.

"Strike me lucky!" ejaculated the tar; "well, you are a plucky one. But it's a rough life, my boy."

"I must rough it in any case, being homeless and friendless in New York."

"True, lad, so if you like I'll take you down to-morrow, and we'll see if you can't ship on board the Water Sprite."

"Thank you very much. When shall I meet you, and at what time?"

"Meet! Why, what tack are you on now, youngster?"

"How do you mean, Tom?"

"Why, we've met already, and shiver my timbers if we parts yet a bit."

"But you will want to go home."

"Yes, and you sails along with me if so be as how you ain't got no other home. So hoist away, lad, cheerily, oh! You helped me and I'll help you."

He took a turning to the right, and very soon came to a halt in front of a large new building.

"Here we are, shipmate!" exclaimed Tom Trenail.

"What place is this?" demanded Richard Gordon.

"Sailors' Home, where I slings my hammock till next voyage."

Tom rapped at the door, which was opened immediately, and an hour afterward Richard Gordon, having supped, was sound asleep in a bed which, if rather coarser than he was accustomed to, was at least clean and comfortable.

Richard Gordon enjoyed a good night's rest and a hearty breakfast at the Sailors' Home, after which Tom Trenail took Dick, as we shall henceforth name our hero, to a shipping office, where both were engaged—Tom as able seaman and Dick as boy.

The captain, whose name was Goodwin, seemed to take a good deal of interest in Dick, who felt glad to ship under such a fine, pleasant-looking skipper.

But the Water Sprite was not to sail till the following Monday.

Dick was located at the Sailors' Home, and Tom Trenail set about preparing his young friend's outfit, having persuaded Captain Goodwin, with whom he had previously sailed, to give the boy some money in advance.

One of the numerous clothing shops was accordingly visited, and Dick was provided with the following articles, viz.:

One blue pilot jacket, one pair of blue cloth trousers, two pairs of canvas trousers, two blue woolen shirts, a pair of shoes, and sou'wester cap.

In addition to these, Tom ordered "a donkey's breakfast," and while Dick was wondering what this could mean, the outfitter produced it, in the shape of a straw bed.

A rug and a blanket were next purchased, as well as a tin pannikin, a metal spoon, and a full-sized clasp-knife, which latter article, Tom said, no sailor should be without.

All these articles were sent to the Sailors' Home, and Dick had nothing to do but wait for Monday.

He employed his time mostly in looking about the docks and river side, picking up any scraps of nautical knowledge that fell in his way, and felt quite cheerful in the prospect of earning an independent livelihood.

CHAPTER II.

THE ANCHOR WATCH.

The Water Sprite was to haul out of dock about noon on Monday.

At eleven o'clock Dick, who was all impatience, sent most of his things down, and would have followed, but old Tom Trenail was in no such hurry.

"You see, my boy, when we do get on board we shall be there for three months; so come and have a glass and drink a good voyage."

Dick hesitated for a moment, and then followed Tom into the tavern, where he found three or four more sailors, who were to be his messmates for the voyage.

Tom Trenail knew them all, and having related how he first made Dick's acquaintance, they gave him a rough but hearty welcome; and after one glass of grog, they proceeded in a body to the dock where the good ship Water Sprite was lying, prepared to spread her wings and skim over the sea.

But on arriving at the wharf they were greeted with an unexpected piece of news.

No preparation seemed to have been made for warping the ship out, but a group of excited shipping clerks and dock officials were telling every one that there had been a serious railway accident, and that among the wounded was Captain Goodwin.

This, of course, caused some delay, but while the men were still loitering on the wharf, down came one of the owners, and with him a nautical-looking gentleman, but not half so nice a looking one as Captain Goodwin.

The crew of the Water Sprite was then called, and the state of affairs explained, Captain Poulton being presented to them as the commander of the vessel, vice Goodwin.

By this time, however, those who had engaged to sail had got rid of their cash and were glad to be off to sea under any skipper, so no objection was made to Captain Poulton's appointment to the command.

"But I don't like him as well as Captain Goodwin," said Dick Gordon.

"That's fancy, my lad," responded Tom; "we none of us know anything about him yet, and it won't do to condemn a skipper or ship 'cos of a ugly figurehead."

"But his eye—he can't look any one straight in the face."

"All through lookin' five ways for fair weather."

And with this consolation, Dick was obliged to rest satisfied.

It was too late to think of working out of dock that day, so they were compelled to wait till the next.

Very much the same kind of scene was enacted on the road from their lodgings to the dock, and by the time they reached the wharf most of the party were not exactly intoxicated, but three sheets in the wind.

However, the new captain was there, all ready to make a start.

"Now then, men," said he, "bundle forward, stow your traps away, choose your bunks and then set to with a will."

Dick, who had kept close by Tom Trenail, followed that

worthy to the forecabin and stowed his bed in a spare bunk, placing his bag of extra clothes for a pillow.

He then returned on deck, where a great surprise awaited him.

There stood Mr. Harefield in conversation with the second mate, an officer Dick had not seen before, although the first mate had been present when our hero signed articles at the shipping office.

"I fear this bodes no good to me," thought Dick; then suddenly he remembered that Harefield had not seen him, and that probably he had come on board about some other business.

Dick certainly had no intention of becoming a skulker or of shirking any of his duties, and, therefore, did not retreat unseen to the forecabin, as he might have done.

"Now, my lad, bear a hand here. Tail on behind us and coil the hawser—t'other way; begin at your right foot, then in front of your left toe, then out in front, and so back to the right foot again. Well done, you'll soon make a sailor."

Thus did old Tom Trenail encourage his charge, and Dick had almost forgotten the presence of his enemy on board, when he received a stinging blow across the shoulders.

Looking up suddenly, he found himself face to face with the evil countenance of Harefield.

"You young villain!" said he, raising the cane to repeat the blow. "I'll teach you to—"

What moral lesson Harefield was going to inculcate, the world at large can never know, for Dick dropped the rope he was coiling, and leaping forward dealt his foe a blow which caused him to stagger over a pail and fall to the deck.

"You whelp!" shouted the second mate. "You dare not lift your hand except to work."

Tom Trenail now interposed.

"Look here, sir, you ought to protect the boy, who was buckling to with a will. Our moorings ain't cast off yet, and we hain't left port; this affair with that lubber can be settled before a magistrate."

But this proposal did not seem to suit either Harefield or the second mate, especially as the first officer, who had witnessed the affair, said:

"The boy was quite right, and as soon as that lubber in long logs has done his business with you, Mr. Scott, he had better go ashore and get his eye painted."

Harefield, it appeared, had something to say to the captain, and went aft.

"Well done, my lad. That was a hot smeller you gave the cowardly swab, and I like your pluck," said one of the sailors. "My eye! his starboard peeper is makin' signals of distress, and no mistake."

Harefield, having finished his business, went on shore, giving our hero, as he passed, a look which, if looks could kill, would have finished Dick's career then and there, but Dick simply smiled, for he thought:

"I shall be soon out at sea. The first mate seems inclined to be my friend, so I need not much fear the second, if I only do my duty, as I am resolved I will."

"Cast off the stern rope!" was the order.

A few minutes more the Water Sprite floated out into the river, where she was taken into tow by a tug and slowly proceeded down the bay.

A little below Navesink the tug cast off the tow rope and left the good Water Sprite to her own devices, and the wind being very light and baffling, Captain Poulton determined to drop anchor for the night, which was done, and the men having had their tea, an anchor watch was set.

At sea, be it understood, the crew of a vessel is divided

into two parties, or watches, who take it in turns to be on deck; but when a vessel is at anchor in a port or harbor, two men are deemed sufficient to see that no intruders come on board, and that the vessel does not drag at her anchor.

The boys are frequently exempt from this duty, but Dick, being anxious to learn all that could be learned, volunteered to keep watch with Tom Trenail.

The sun had set, and the ship had her light burning at the main-yard arm, when Tom Trenail and Dick Gordon came on deck for their two hours' spell.

Now Tom had imbibed a pretty considerable quantity of rum during the day and felt rather drowsy.

Accordingly, having told Dick to keep a bright lookout, the old tar, who would never have dreamed of doing such a thing at sea, coiled himself up for a nap.

Dick paced up and down, first port side, then starboard, but nothing occurred to disturb his watch till it was more than half over, when he thought he heard a slight splash in the water.

He looked in the direction of the sound, but the night was too dark to distinguish anything.

However, he deemed it best to rouse Tom.

Together they thoroughly examined the vessel, and then it was discovered that a boat that had been towing alongside was cut adrift.

The first mate was roused and the crew turned out of their bunks to man other boats and to go in pursuit, and then it was discovered that two of the men were missing.

No doubt they had taken the boat and gone ashore, perhaps to desert, or perhaps only to have a night's spree in the town.

Great was the wrath of the skipper when morning came without bringing any traces of the runaways who, however, had not been rated A. B., but simply ordinary seamen.

Captain Poulton endeavored to make up his crew, but there was not a hand to be had—except one, and this one was a tall, awkward lad, a year older than Dick Gordon, and he came on board in a boat, at the stern sheet of which sat Mr. Harefield.

"This is the boy I spoke to you about, captain," said he, as he climbed on deck.

Captain Poulton did not look very pleased with the appearance of the new accession to his crew.

"What's your name, lad?" he asked.

"Isaac Fitch, sir."

"Well, as I am short-handed, you may join. Have you got your traps with you?"

"Yes, sir, in the boat."

"Hand up this lubber's bag!" shouted the first mate to the waterman; "and now, Mr. Watsyourname, if you don't want to go to Valparaiso with us you had better bundle down into your boat again."

"You'll look well after my young friend here?" asked Mr. Harefield, as he turned to go.

"Yes," replied Scott, the second mate.

The usurer stepped over the side and scrambled down into his boat, but not without casting on young Dick Gordon a look expressive of the most undying hatred.

Dick, however, cared little for that, but sidled up towards Isaac Fitch, whom he instinctively looked upon as a rival and probably an enemy.

"What are you staring at?" demanded Isaac.

"You," promptly and bluntly responded Dick.

"Well, I don't like it, so look another way, or else I'll bung your eye up!"

"You had better try at that game," said Dick, clenching his fists.

Isaac would probably have accepted the invitation had not the first mate come up at that moment and thrust the pair apart.

"No fighting here," said he; "attend to your duties."

Then was heard the voice of the skipper.

"All hands up anchor, ahoy!"

In a very short space of time the windlass was manned.

Dick, having been previously instructed by Tom Trenail, promptly got his chain-hook and hauled back the chain cable as it came off the windlass.

The anchor being up and the sails set, the deck was swept and breakfast served, and by the time that meal was over the gallant ship had passed out to sea.

Sea sickness is not a very heroic thing, and it is no use disguising the fact that our hero was very sick.

So was Isaac Fitch.

"Halloo, youngster!" said Tom Trenail, giving the latter a slap on the back which greatly aided him in settling his accounts with old Father Neptune. "Halloo, youngster, don't you wish your mother sold vinegar, and you had stopped at home to bottle it off?"

"Indeed I do!" responded Isaac. "Oh, I shall die if the ship wobbles about like this!"

A loud peal of laughter was the only answer Isaac's distress elicited, and even Dick could not repress a smile.

Isaac was too miserable to notice this, and rolled into the forecabin.

Dick was too proud to follow this example, and remained on deck, assisting the men as much as he was able.

"Well done, lad!" said the first mate.

In an hour or two Dick grew better.

He was unable to touch any dinner, but tea-time found him with a good appetite and the color back in his cheeks.

After tea came the muster.

All hands, cook and all, were called aft and their names called over, each man answering.

Of course, the two who deserted did not respond, and they were marked as runaways.

Dick's name was last but one on the list, and he promptly answered:

"Here, sir."

"Isaac Fitch."

Isaac made no response.

"Where is the young lubber?" demanded Captain Poulton; "surely he can't have run away."

"No, sir; he's coiled in his bunk," said one of the men.

"Then fetch him out; you go, youngster, and if he won't walk, drag him along."

Dick was not displeased at being intrusted with this errand.

He ran off to the forecabin, sounds of a scuffle were heard, and then Dick reappeared with his right hand fixed on Isaac's collar, while the left hand firmly grasped the hinder part of Master Fitch's most necessary garment.

The unfortunate victim was compelled to run along the deck till he reached the spot where the rest of the crew stood.

Then his foot slipped and he sat down with sufficient violence to bring tears into his eyes.

Everybody laughed, except Mr. Scott, the second mate, who seemed to take a great interest in Isaac.

"Isaac Fitch!" roared the captain, who still held the articles which each man had signed when engaged.

"Here I am. Why can't you let me die in peace?"

"Stand up when you speak to the skipper," said one of the crew, giving him a kick behind.

"Die in peace! I'll cut you in pieces with a rope's end if you are not smarter," said the captain.

However, Isaac having answered his name, the next thing was to divide the crew into two parties, or watches.

The men and boys, with the exception of the cook, who was sent below, remained amidships, while the first mate took up his position on the starboard (right-hand side looking forward), the second mate going over to the port side.

The first officer then carefully looked over the men, and called to him the one he fancied was the smartest seaman of the crew; then the second mate made his choice, and so on, in rotation.

The two boys were left till last, when it being the first mate's turn to choose, he unhesitatingly called Dick to starboard, Isaac being thus left to the port watch.

Captain Poulton then commanded silence.

"Now, my men," said he, "I've just got one thing to tell you, and that is, that if you obey orders and work like men, we shall get on very well together, but if any man shirks, or skulks, or cheeks me, by the holy piper I'll make him wish Davy Jones had got him before we are around Cape Horn. That's all I've got to say, and it's not too much for any of you to remember. Starboard watch, go below."

"My eye! he's a Tartar!" exclaimed old Tom Trenail.

"No mistake about that," said Bill Chapman, "and you mark my words, Tom Trenail," continued the sailor, after a pause, "this 'ere change won't bring good luck to the ship. I'll lay my month's pay against a quid o' tobacco some on us will never see New York again."

CHAPTER III.

THE GIRL CASTAWAY.

For a week or so all went well until one day our hero, having got into a lively tussle with his enemy, Isaac Fitch, was ordered to the mast-head for punishment.

Dick had been perched in his airy position perhaps half an hour, when he observed some strange object rising and falling on the waves.

The sun was rapidly declining towards the horizon in the same quarter, and the reflected rays glanced so brightly in Dick's eyes that it was some minutes before he could make out what the object was.

At length he ejaculated:

"A fragment of wreck!"

He shaded his eyes with his hands and looked again.

Yes, it was.

It was evidently a portion of the mainmast of some vessel, and a smaller spar, lashed side by side.

But what was that on it?

Twice—thrice Dick looked before he could be certain that it was a human being.

But when the fact was firmly established in his mind he lost no time in calling out:

"On deck, there!"

"Ay—ay! What is it?" growled Scott.

"Some floating piece of wreck, about a mile and a half on the weather bow."

"Is that all you have to report, you young lubber?"

"No, sir; there is some one on it," replied Dick.

"Dead or alive?"

"That's more than I can say. It seems motionless."

"Then no doubt it is dead, and we can't take any trouble about it."

"What's that?" said Captain Poulton, who had very quietly come on deck.

"Oh, that young lubber aloft there fancies he can see some pieces of wreck."

"Not so much of a lubber, Mr. Scott," rejoined the skipper, as he looked up into the rigging. "Who sent the boy up there?"

"I did."

"What for?"

"Fighting."

The second officer's tone was very surly, and Captain Poulton noticed it.

But anxiety to know about the wreck was the uppermost feeling in his breast, so he gave orders to lower a boat and examine it.

"And you come down, youngster, and go in the boat," he added, hailing Dick.

Our hero needed no second invitation to descend to the deck, which he speedily reached, to the intense disgust of Mr. Scott.

Tom Trenail and Bill Chapman prepared the boat for lowering, and then jumped into it, being quickly followed by Dick, who scrambled into the stern sheets.

"Lower away!" said Captain Poulton.

For a few seconds they hung suspended in mid-air.

Then the boat touched the water and instantly cast off.

Tom and Bill Chapman seized the oars and bent to their work, while Dick steered as direct a course as he could to the wreckage, standing up in the stern sheets that he might see well ahead.

An interval of ten minutes elapsed from the time the boat was lowered.

On the deck of the good vessel all hands watched the progress of the boat.

"Half a dozen strokes more," said Dick, "and we shall be there."

The half dozen strokes were given, and then the nose of the boat grated against a portion of a broken topmast, and the rowers sprang to their feet.

"Alive or dead, I wonder?"

"Poor creature! How came she here?"

Thus spoke Bill Chapman and Tom Trenail.

But our hero promptly exclaimed:

"Cut away those lashings and lift her into the boat as quickly as possible!"

The two old seamen at once got their knives out and set to work.

In less than a minute they had dragged into the boat a fair-haired girl, thirteen or fourteen years of age.

"Dead!" exclaimed Dick.

"No."

There was a quivering of the lips.

Then of the eyelids.

Then a pair of blue orbs gazed up in Dick's face.

"Water—water!" murmured a faint voice.

There was no such thing in the boat.

But Bill Chapman had his ration of rum with him in a bottle, and this he applied to the girl's lips.

She swallowed a small portion of it, but then pushed the flask away, saying:

"It burns me. Give me water."

"You shall have some, my dear, as soon as ever we reach the ship," replied Bill.

The two sailors wrapped their jackets around her, and then pulled with all their might toward the ship.

Every eye on board was directed toward the boat and its contents.

"The young lubber has saved one life, at all events," said Captain Poulton, turning to the second officer.

Mr. Scott turned away, inwardly cursing our hero.

He had now another motive, besides that furnished by Mr. Harefield, for hating Dick Gordon.

But vengeance sleeps sometimes, and interest whether of money or hatred, accumulates when it is not touched.

The boat was alongside.

"On deck there!" hailed Tom Trenail.

"Ay—ay! What is it?" asked Captain Poulton.

"Better send down some tackle to hoist this poor child up. She's not very heavy, but precious weak."

In a few seconds a couple of ropes were lowered and fastened around the girl's body and the sailors' jackets in which she was wrapped.

In another moment she was on deck.

Captain Poulton gave one glance at the wasted form. Then he caught the poor child in his arms and hurried into the cabin.

"Water—water!"

"Here's something better than water," said he.

And he handed her the cup of tea he was about to drink when attention was first called to the wreck.

She drank it and seemed revived.

Then Captain Poulton hurried her into a little spare cabin by the side of his own.

"Sleep is what you most require now," said he. "So roll yourself up in those blankets and rest in peace. This lamp will burn all night and here is food if you feel hungry."

They were only rough sailors on board the Water Sprite. If there had been any women on board probably the sea waif would have had better attendance, but Captain Poulton and his men did what they could for her comfort, and did it in a most delicate manner.

In a very few minutes the rescued girl had rolled herself in some blankets and sobbed herself to sleep.

Decks had been scrubbed in the morning before the rescued one awoke.

During the night old Trenail had quietly entered her cabin and dried her rather scanty apparel at the galley fire, and then replaced it.

Tom, Bill Chapman and Dick Gordon were on deck, as it was their watch, and Captain Poulton, being unable to sleep, had turned out early.

A beautiful morning it was, too.

"What about the young lady, cap'en?" asked Chapman. "Do you know what vessel she shipped in, or what port bound for?"

"Not yet, but when she awakes and has had some breakfast, no doubt she'll tell us."

"Awake!" ejaculated Tom Trenail. "Why, cap'en, she's wide awake now—wide awake as a cat is to steal cream."

Captain Poulton turned around and in a moment found a pair of slender arms around his neck.

"Thank you—thank you, dear sir! I have to thank you for my life," said a musical female voice.

"My dear young lady, you have most of all to thank the boy, who was the first to see you floating on the wreck."

The young lady—for lady she was, despite her sea-stained and tattered clothing—immediately served Dick as she had served the captain, causing our hero to blush most profusely.

"And these two men," continued Captain Poulton, indicating Tom Trenail and Bob Chapman, "they had a good deal to do with your rescue."

The little lady proved that she was not at all impartial.

Then she said:

"Good, kind friends, I can only repay you by heartfelt gratitude. But, oh! is it possible that I am the only one saved?"

"What was the name of your ship, my dear Miss——"

"Alice Singleton is my name, and the ship I sailed in was called the Moonbeam."

"From what port?"

"We sailed from New York, and were on our way to Canterbury, New Zealand," was the reply.

"Going to settle there?"

"No—at least I was not. Uncle Henry Brooks was captain of the Moonbeam, and he would not part with me. Oh, my dear uncle, to think that I should lose him thus!"

And tears began to flow down the pale, wasted face—tears of bitter, poignant regret for one who had been everything to her.

"Your father and mother, my dear?" asked Captain Poulton, in a few minutes.

"They died a long time ago—I can scarcely remember them. I lived with Uncle Henry for years past."

"You used to sail with him, then, when he went on a voyage?"

"Not always, though I did this last time, because I did not think I should have another chance of seeing Cousin Walter for a long time."

"Who is Cousin Walter?" demanded Dick, who had hitherto listened in silence.

"His name is Walter Borman. His mother was my mother's sister. Poor Walter was drowned, and his wife, too, for he married only a fortnight before we left the United States."

"Oh, poor Walter!" said Dick with, however, a much more satisfied expression of countenance than he had worn a minute previously.

"Well, my dear, you must make up your mind for a long cruise in the Water Sprite and then, when we get back to America we can communicate with your relatives."

"I have only one that I know of," said Alice, sadly.

"Indeed!"

"And I don't like him a bit!" she continued, stamping on the deck and clenching her tiny fist.

"But, my dear Miss——," exclaimed Captain Poulton.

"I don't like him a bit," Alice Singleton repeated. "I believe Charles Harefield is a bad, unprincipled man."

"That he is. Take my word for it," said Dick.

"What! Do you know him?" exclaimed Captain Poulton and Alice, simultaneously.

"Well, it was he who ruined my parents and then turned me out into the wide world to starve. But what relationship does he bear to you, Miss Singleton?"

"He is my cousin."

There was a silence for a time, then Captain Poulton asked:

"But what about the wreck? Do you think any of the others were saved?"

"I fear not, for both boats were smashed before the mast fell. Uncle tied me to the mast, and was with me in the water for some time, but at length a huge wave washed him away. I would willingly have gone to the bottom with him."

"I am very glad you did not," said Dick Gordon, with an earnestness that made the fair girl blush.

"Well, Miss Singleton, by this time breakfast is ready, so come with me into the cabin, if you please," said Captain Poulton. "You, Gordon, will find plenty of work forward."

Dick took the hint, and with a touch of his cap retired.

CHAPTER IV.

A MUTINY.

For some weeks after reaching the tropics the good ship *Water Sprite* encountered such calm weather as to materially interfere with the prosperity of the voyage.

Towards sunset, Dick noticed a good deal of whispering going on among the men of the second mate's watch.

"Something up," thought Dick, and forthwith he told his suspicions to old Tom Trenail.

"It is nothing, my lad. Sure to be a little grumbling after old horse," replied the old tar.

Dick watched the crew and the mutiny broke out. Alice and the captain were set adrift in a boat and the crew began noting in the hold.

The crew devoured their grog, roared songs and, in fact, set Mr. Scott at defiance, telling him that he was no more than themselves; that they would not obey him now that he had mutinied, and that when the brandy was finished they would elect a captain.

Presently the sun went down, the moon arose, and they became silent.

They all slumbered in the cabin, except one man, who volunteered to take a trick at the wheel.

"Now, then, I can venture," said Dick, who had carefully watched all their doings.

He crept carefully and quietly over the bales till he got near the hatchway which, as he anticipated, had been left open.

"Now, then," thought Dick, "for a bold venture."

He quickly slid down from the bales and climbed-up the ladder to the deck.

No one was to be seen save the man at the wheel, who seemed to be steering instinctively, and without any knowledge of the course given him.

"If I can secure their weapons," thought Dick, "the battle will be ours."

And he began creeping toward the after part of the ship, but before he could reach the cabin he felt himself seized by the collar and heard the loathed voice of Scott exclaiming:

"I've got you at any rate, young shaver, and where the deuce did you come from?"

Dick made no verbal reply, but struggled violently to get free from the clutches of his captor, who seemed equally determined that our hero should not escape.

Now the hard work incidental to his seafaring career, combined with the bracing air he had for weeks past breathed, and a sufficiency of wholesome, if coarse, food had braved up Dick's muscles finely, and Scott soon found that it was no easy task to secure the lad.

"Here, Fitch—Isaac!" shouted the mate, "come up and help me! Quick, d'ye hear?"

A few seconds later the head and shoulders of Isaac Fitch appeared above the level of the deck, and as soon as the lanky youth saw the state of affairs, he drew a pistol from his belt.

"Don't shoot!" exclaimed Scott.

But Isaac, now that he had a chance, was determined to pay off all old scores, so he took a very good aim and pulled the trigger.

Alas!

Isaac was no sportsman, and in shooting at the pigeon, contrived to severely damage the crow; for in the course of the struggle, Dick managed to drag Mr. Scott's body in

the line of fire, and consequently that worthy mutineer received the bullet in the muscles of his right arm.

Howling with pain, Scott released his hold, and Dick, snatching a belaying-pin that lay handy, gave his adversary a blow that, for the time, quieted him.

Then he made a hostile demonstration toward Isaac, but Master Fitch would not stay for the encounter; he fled down into the darkest part of the after-hold.

The man at the wheel being aroused from his nap by the sound of Isaac's pistol, left the helm and rushed forward to attack Dick, but his foot caught in a rope that had been left stretched across the deck, and down he went headlong in the hold.

Dick by this time rushed forward, and a few seconds sufficed to release his companions.

"Hurrah! the ship is ours!" shouted Dick.

"Steady, lad!" said Tom. "We must settle them rascals in the cabin first."

"Settle them? There must be no killing here, if you please," replied Dick, firmly. "You may make them prisoners, though."

"Ay, ay, sir!" said Tom, touching his cap, half in jest, half in earnest.

Then, in a body, they went aft to the cabin, where the main body of the mutineers were lying like senseless logs on the floor, sleeping off the liquor they had swallowed.

Tom Trenail, however, halted by the way to take a double turn around Mr. Scott's wrists and ankles with a stout cord.

The noise of the scuffle had not reached the ears of one of the drunken band, all of whom were bound hand and foot, and carried out on the deck, where Bill Chapman ranged them in a row to wait till a place could be cleared in the hold for them.

"Take the wheel, Harris," said Dick. "We must settle about watches presently. Chapman, take a couple of men and drag those skulkers out of the after-hold."

The men obeyed their young skipper, almost as promptly as they would have done if Captain Poulton himself had given the command.

"Now then, you Fitch, come on up!" shouted Chapman. "We have got Mr. Scott and the rest on 'em, so you may as well come up and have your hands tied."

At first there was no response, but presently Isaac shuffled up the ladder, saying, in whining tones:

"Pleuse, Mr. Chapman, it wasn't my fault. It was all Mr. Scott's fault; he made me do it."

"It wasn't Mr. Scott who made you fire at our new skipper, young Dick Gordon, just now," responded Chapman, "and it won't be my fault if I don't have the job of cutting your back to pieces with a stout rope's end, you young scamp!"

"Don't hit him, Chapman," said Dick. "He, like all the others, must be handed over to the authorities for punishment when we reach port."

"Ay, ay! and if Jack Ketch is on the sick list I'm blest if I won't volunteer to string up the whole blessed lot."

"But how about that other man below there?"

The man alluded to, he who had left the wheel and fallen down the hatchway, at that instant came up, bleeding from a severe cut in the head he had received in his fall.

"I give in, mates," said he, sullenly, holding out his hands to be bound.

"Hold!" exclaimed Dick.

The men all stared, and Dick continued:

"What induced you to mutiny? Captain Poulton surely never did you any injury."

"He never did. It was that sweep, Scott, somehow or other got over me."

"Come into the cabin. Tom Chapman, I shall want you."

The three men followed the provisional captain into the cabin, where Dick seated himself, and then spoke as follows:

"Now, Smith, I am inclined to think you are not so bad as some of them, so I'll give you a chance. Will you give up all connection with those fellows and join the starboard watch?"

"That I will if you take me," exclaimed the man.

"Very good; but you must make a confession, in the presence of these witnesses, of all you know about the uprising."

"That ain't much. D'y'e see, Mr. Scott set it about that the skipper was going to scuttle the ship, and that all the best provisions was kept for the cabin to be lowered into his boat when the time come, along with you, Mr. Gordon, and old Tom, and the fast mate. He swore that was the little game; then, ses he, 'Let's take the ship and stop that hankey-pankey.' So the ship was took."

"What became of Captain Poulton and the young lady?"

"I don't know—I'll swear I don't know, and there ain't a man on board the Water Sprite as knows. He vanished and the gal."

"And Mr. Adams?"

"He was throwed overboard. I see him stretched out on the deck with a bullet hole through his forehead; then Wilson and Jamsiey Johnston comes up, swearin' becoss they couldn't overhaul the skipper, and they picks up Mr. Adams, rifles his pockets and chucks him over the stern."

"Who fired the shot that killed him?" demanded Dick, who had taken copious notes of the man's confession.

"That I can't say, becoss I was busy barrin' you up in the fo'castle, but I think it must have been either Scott, Wilson or Johnston, for the rest on us hadn't got no pistols till after that, when we opened the arms chest."

"Good! Have you anything more to say?"

"Nothin' more, 'cept as how I'm sorry I let that ere black-hearted lubber get round me, and I hopes you'll make matters as light as you can for me when we gets into port."

"That will depend on the manner in which you behave during the time you remain on board. Here, sign this paper."

The seaman stepped forward and with difficulty put his name to the document.

Then Tom Trenail put his mark, and Bill Chapman wrote his name, very modestly abstaining from the use of capital letters.

"Now, Smith, you can go forward," said Dick, when he had affixed his own autograph to the paper.

CHAPTER V.

IN DANGER.

The fourth morning after the mutiny, Dick came on deck early and hailed the lookout.

"Ay, ay, sir!" responded the man.

"Any sign of the boat yet?"

"Something—I fancy it is the boat—on the bow."

In a few seconds Dick Gordon was up at the mast-head beside the lookout and had snatched the telescope from his hand.

"Hurrah!" he shouted, after a minute's examination of the black speck on the horizon. "I believe it is the captain."

A hurried consultation with Bill Chapman resulted in the bows of the vessel being pointed toward the strange object, and the fore and main topgallant sails were set.

They were soon within a mile of the boat.

"It's all right!" shouted Dick, who had been looking through the glass. "There's the skipper and Alice. Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!" shouted Tom Trenail.

Bill Chapman gave an answering shout, and the crew re-echoed it.

But it seemed as if Captain Poulton misunderstood the shout, for he still kept his little boat staggering under a press of sail that threatened every moment to drive the frail craft under water.

Captain Poulton evidently thought the ship was still in possession of the mutineers.

"Luff up a little," said Dick to the man at the wheel. "We must pass her as close as we can to the windward."

Then, after a whisper with Tom Trenail, he gave the word and the ship was denuded of all her canvas except the fore and main staysail.

But the Water Sprite had gathered such way that before her course could be altered she struck the boat fairly amid-ship.

A loud scream was heard from Alice.

Down went the frail boat instantly, and the two occupants were struggling in the water. The skipper, however, kept a firm hold of Alice. Then a rope was thrown with a life-buoy attached, which the skipper managed to catch, and after a little exertion both Captain Poulton and Alice Singleton were hauled up on board safe and sound, though the young lady was rather exhausted from exposure to wind and weather.

"A narrow escape!" he exclaimed, shaking the water from his clothes.

Then he sent Alice at once to the cabin to change her dress.

"But who commands here?" demanded Captain Poulton, after a pause.

"You do, sir," replied Dick. "We acknowledge no other commander while you stand on the deck."

"Good! But who has commanded?"

"I have, sir."

"You!"

"Yes, sir, with the aid and advice of Tom Trenail and Bill Chapman."

"And the mutineers?"

"Are safe in the hold, with irons on their wrists and legs."

"Where is Mr. Adams?"

"Dead."

"Heaven rest his soul! Was he killed by those villains below?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then they shall swing for it! Poor Adams! It has been indeed a fatal voyage for him, but we must look to our own safety now, so away aloft, men—we must not show a stitch of canvas."

The order was scarcely executed, when down came the hurricane with a noise like thunder.

And Dick, like a thorough young sea-dog, was delighted.

But the skipper was not, for the storm continued, and showed no signs of abating.

The darkness of night, real night, descended on them, and still the wind howled fearfully through the rigging.

They were scudding before the blast under bare poles, for no canvas woven in mortal loom could have withstood the fury of that fearful storm.

It was midnight when Dick shouted out:

"A light; about three points on the lee bow."

"Nonsense! It's all as dark as pitch in that quarter," exclaimed Captain Poulton.

But Chapman, who had gone to the wheel again after a brief rest, exclaimed:

"I see it; it's a three-masted ship."

A longer look convinced all on deck that there was, some distance ahead, and to the leeward of them, a light which first showed itself on the crest of a giant wave, and then disappeared, as the ship on which it was displayed sank in the trough of the sea. Then up again, and glistening for some few seconds like a star of hope in the black chaos of wind and water.

"Keep as clear as you can!" cried Captain Poulton, addressing the helmsman. "When day breaks we can see what she is like."

But would the Water Sprite float till daybreak? That was a question that presented itself to the mind of more than one stout seaman on board. It was true that as yet she had made little water, but then who could tell what might happen in the next five hours that must intervene before daylight?

When day broke the Water Sprite was still afloat, and so was the vessel whose light they had noticed in the night.

They could now make it out to be a three-masted ship, evidently in great distress, for the mizzen had snapped seven or eight feet about the deck and the foretopmast had gone.

But the skipper dared not alter the course of the Water Sprite, although he saw a signal of distress flying.

They kept the vessel before the wind, and like true sailors as they were, waited till they could get a chance of aiding those who were in a worse condition than themselves.

But the storm, instead of abating, seemed to rage more furiously than before.

Tom Trenail, who stood by the side of our hero watched the men on board the stranger as they worked at the pumps.

"That water is quite clear" said the old tar. "It's a sign they are only just pumping the sea out as it runs in."

Presently down came the lurrriam with force enough to blow the vessel out of the water almost dashing the foam in a blinding shower over the deck of the Water Sprite.

It was impossible to see twenty yards from the vessel's side.

When the fierce gust passed away the strange vessel was no longer visible.

"Gone to Davy Jones!" exclaimed Tom Trenail.

"Heaven have mercy on their souls!" said Dick Gordon, in fervent tones; and his prayer was echoed by all who stood on the deck of the Water Sprite.

"Not a spar or plank to be seen," said Captain Poulton, after a careful survey of the region where the unknown vessel foundered.

"No, they are all gone, every soul," replied Bill Chapman.

"Hold hard! What's that?" said Tom.

He pointed, but they saw nothing at first. Then on the crest of a wave was seen a floating spar, to which three or four human beings were clinging as their only hope for safety.

"Starboard!" shouted Captain Poulton to the man at the wheel. "We must risk a little to save them."

Nearer and yet nearer, till they were close by, then half a dozen pairs of willing hands snatched the poor, half-drowned wretches from the jaws of death.

Three sailors and one passenger.

"Good heaven!" exclaimed Dick Gordon, as the face of the passenger met his view.

"What's the matter?" demanded Captain Poulton.

"It's Harefield, the man who brought my father to ruin."

"And that girl's uncle?"

"The same, sir."

"It's an ill wind, indeed, that blew him here," muttered the skipper to himself. Then in louder tones he said:

"See that these men are well taken care of, Chapman."

"Ay, ay, sir!" was the old sailor's willing response.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CREEK.

"Land! land!"

The sound was a joyful one for all on board, except the prisoners, who expected to be delivered up to justice.

It was a low, flat coast, covered with thick forests almost down to the beach.

"It will never do to run the ship ashore there," said the skipper.

Then he hailed:

"Matthead there! Keep a bright lookout for any creek or opening. Dick, you run aloft and take my glass with you."

Dick did as desired, and in ten minutes was able to report that he saw just the kind of place the captain wanted.

The ship's course was directed towards it, and they found themselves floating on the bosom of a river not more than two hundred yards wide, but with a sufficient depth of water for a vessel twice the size of the Water Sprite.

It was hard work for the limited crew to make the vessel fast to a couple of trees on the bank, unload the stores, build tents and get the prisoners ashore before dark, but it was managed, and sentries having been placed, as well to guard the mutineers as to protect the camp against Indians, they lay down to sleep.

"Glorious!" exclaimed Dick, as he sprang to his feet in the morning. It was a scene that might almost make a man imagine himself in Paradise.

Alice wanted to make an excursion into the forest, but Captain Poulton would not, for some time, hear it.

But after repeated entreaties he consented, saying:

"Don't go far, and if you see any signs of Indians, return."

"Ay, ay, sir!" responded Dick, and having armed himself with a light axe and a pistol, he set out joyfully, accompanied by Alice.

Dick's attention was soon drawn to some object floating down the stream close to the shore.

It was a canoe.

Dick started back under some bushes, but seeing it was empty he grew bolder and resolved to secure it.

"Jump in, Miss Alice!" he cried, when he had secured the craft and ascertained that it was watertight.

Alice immediately accepted the invitation, saying:

"Where are we going, Dick?"

"Up the river a little way. It will be much easier to paddle this canoe than to force our way through the brush. Here's a paddle."

He lightly stepped into the canoe and began to urge it up the stream, which speedily grew narrower while the forest became more dense on either side.

"Stop—stop!" screamed Alice, suddenly, with accents of terror.

Dick instantly dropped his paddle and looked up.

His face turned pale, as well it might; for there, within a yard of him, was the head of a huge serpent, which was evidently bent on making a meal on either one or the other.

The tail of the monster was coiled around the branch of a tree, and the body swung to and fro like a pendulum, the head being close to the water.

A pair of greenish eyes glistened wickedly upon them, and every few seconds a long forked tongue would be thrust out as though to taste the feast it anticipated.

Dick saw the danger in an instant. He snatched up his axe and gave the monster two heavy blows on the head.

With a loud and hissing noise the monster loosened its hold on the branch and launched itself upon them.

Luckily, it fell some feet short of the canoe, which, however, was nearly overturned by the splash, and as the reptile came to the surface of the water a well-directed shot from Dick's revolver sent him writhing in his death agony into the swift and muddy stream.

"It is all over with him!" cried Dick.

"I am glad of it," replied Alice. "I consider this is the second time you have saved my life, and I thank you—oh, I thank you more than I can find words to tell you."

"Dear Miss Singleton," replied our hero, "you are committed to my charge by the captain, and I am bound to lay down my life to preserve yours if need be."

So saying, he turned the head of the canoe down stream and drifted until they reached a sudden bend and could just see the mainmast of the Water Sprite over an intervening angle of the land, when Dick suddenly paused.

"Did you hear that, Miss Singleton? Hush!"

They both listened attentively, and then plainly heard the voice of Mr. Scott, and in tones of command, too.

"Have you got them all tied up securely?" they heard him ask.

"Yes," responded the voice of Jamaica Johnson.

"Then we'll have dinner and hang 'em quietly and comfortably in the afternoon."

This speech was followed by a burst of uproarious laughter and loudest of all were the voices of Mr. Harefield, Wilson, Johnson and Scotch Harry.

Then Harefield was heard to say:

"I object to their being strung up, though, till the boy returns. I want him to see his old friends dance in the air before his own turn comes."

"So do I. The whelp, I owe him something!" exclaimed Scott.

"I want the job of tying him up. Ha! ha! ha! what a jolly spree!" said Isaac Fitch.

Alice and Richard looked blankly at each other, and then Dick said:

"Something dreadful has happened during our absence. We had better run the boat ashore among these bushes. We shall then be on the opposite side of the stream and can see what they are doing and perhaps help our friends."

Alice had no other suggestion to make, so the boat was carefully drawn up under the shade of some dense tropical plants, and then Dick, carefully creeping along till he had a full view of the ship and the camp on the opposite bank.

The tables were indeed turned with a vengeance.

The mutineers were no more masters, though evidently they had not gained their victory without a severe struggle.

Captain Poulton and half a dozen men were now bound hand and foot, and lying stretched out upon the bank were five bodies.

Corpses.

Dick carefully scanned these.

There was one; its face was hidden, but the dress and

figure told Dick plainly enough that it was the body of his old friend—Tom Trenail.

"And Tom is dead at last!" moaned Dick. "My brave, true-hearted friend. Heaven give me the power to avenge you!"

Harris, too, was among the slain, and two of the mutineers, but who the fifth was Dick could not make out.

* * * * *

When Dick and Alice had departed in the morning, Captain Poulton had received applications from several others of the crew for permission to stroll away into the jungle.

At first he was unwilling to comply, but one or two of them beginning to murmur something about favor being shown to young Gordon, he finally consented, arranging that half should remain to guard the camp while the others went to have a look at the country.

"Let each man take a weapon of some kind," said the skipper, "for we don't know much about this part of the country, and there may be hostile Indians about."

Delighted at the prospect of a ramble, the men departed, all promising to be back in a couple of hours.

Captain Poulton then went on board to write a full account of all that had happened, and Mr. Harefield strolled up and down the shore.

Presently he, too, disappeared in the bush. The tropical sun arose higher and higher, and the men who guarded the camp grew drowsy through the intense heat.

Presently there was a little whispering among them, and then three of the six lay down to sleep, the other three remaining as sentries.

And even these were unable to resist the heat long, and sat down on the shore as near the water's edge as possible, that they might feel the slightest breeze that came from its mirror-like surface.

About the very moment that Dick was battling with the serpent, there crept from out the bush, immediately behind the prisoners, who were ranged in a row and fastened to a spar, a being with a nature as subtle and cruel as any serpent that ever crawled.

Mr. Harefield.

A slight rustle he made caused Scott and one or two others of the prisoners to turn their heads, but Harefield held up a warning finger and they were silent.

Two strokes of his knife and Scott was free.

Another and another of the men had his bonds severed. Then, silently and stealthily, those four men crept down to where Tom Trenail, Jack Harris and another man—one of those rescued with Harefield—sat by the water.

Harris had a knife in a sheath slung at his belt, and for greater ease he had pushed the weapon round behind him.

Scott's stealthy fingers clutched the handle, the blade was withdrawn. In an instant poor Jack Harris was a corpse.

At the same moment one of the other men dispatched the sentry, while Harefield and the third mutineer threw themselves on Tom Trenail and endeavored to strangle him.

But Tom happened to turn just at that moment, and having a pistol in his hand, sent the bullet through Harefield's thigh.

Two cruel stabs, one from Scott and the other from his companion, and poor Tom was stretched weltering in his blood by the side of his companions.

"Back—back into the bush! Quick, before Poulton comes on deck. He has a repeating rifle and can pick us off from the ship."

So said Harefield, and he ran back towards the forest,

followed by Scott and the others who, however, paused to cut the bonds of their companions.

Now, Harefield was quite right in his statement that Captain Poulton had a repeating rifle from which half a dozen shots might be fired, but he did not know that all Captain Poulton's cartridges had been wetted and completely spoiled during the hurricane.

"What next?" demanded one of the mutineers.

Scott looked at Harefield, and Harefield looked at Scott. Then they looked out of the bushes towards the good ship *Water Sprite* and saw Captain Poulton come up on deck.

He stared with horror when he saw the dead bodies on the shore, and then rushed below to arm himself.

"What weapons have we?" asked Scott.

Counting up their stock, they found they had three knives, a cutlass, an axe and a pistol.

Scott, who was not devoid of a certain amount of physical courage (as is frequently the case with men who are in a moral sense cowards), seized the axe and, rushing out, cut through the two hawsers by which the ship was secured to the shore.

The *Water Sprite* had her two anchors dropped, otherwise she would have drifted out to sea.

"Mr. Scott," said one of the men, when he returned.

"Well?"

"Them as was asleep here they ran away while we was settlin' t'others."

Scott growled a huge oath at his own negligence, but the fault was too late to be repaired.

"We must make the best of it," said he, after pausing to consider. "Poulton can't come ashore without swimming, which will spoil his rifle, so we had better make an ambush so as to take the other chaps as they come back."

An ambush was arranged, but those for whom it was intended did not fall into it, for having met the men who had escaped, they returned to the camp by another path, and before the mutineers were hardly aware of their presence had fallen upon them.

Powder was a scarce article with both parties, so very few shots were fired, but knives and cutlasses were freely used.

Bill Chapman had an axe, and rushed into the thick of the combat to encounter Scott.

Chapman fought bravely, but he could not reach the villain Scott, nor could he long maintain the combat, for he received a blow on the head from behind which stretched him senseless.

"Here comes the skipper!" shouted one of the mutineers.

There was a loud splash in the water as Captain Poulton, having armed himself with a trusty broadsword, leaped over, in spite of the alligators, and began swimming toward the shore.

But ere he could reach land the combat was virtually at an end.

Bill Chapman had been stunned and disarmed, as had most of his companions; and when the skipper's feet touched dry land he was seized by four of the ruffians.

But he did not yield without a struggle, and one of his antagonists received a wound which eventually caused his death ere the gallant captain's weapon was wrested from his grasp.

Numbers, however, were against him.

He was disarmed, and would have been slain had not Scott shouted out:

"Not now, men! Don't kill him now. We'll have some rare sport presently."

So Captain Poulton was dragged ashore, for his struggle

was made while he was up to his waist in water, and he was bound like those other men who had been faithful to him.

And when that was done, Scott asked the question which reached Dick Gordon's ear and saved him from running his head into the conspirators' den.

And he heard them all agree that he was to be captured before the others were murdered.

And Alice?

The way the ruffians spoke of the helpless girl made his blood run cold, and almost drove all thoughts of prudence out of his head.

Yet for her sake he restrained the fury with which he had been inspired and resolved to try whether he could not yet outwit the villains.

CHAPTER VII.

DICK'S TERRIBLE FLIGHT.

Had our hero been alone he would have remained near the vessel at the risk of his own life, to seize the first opportunity that presented itself of rescuing his companions.

But being in charge of Alice, he dared not expose her to the danger of being captured by the villains.

So, taking Alice by the hand, he plunged at once into the deep recesses of the forest.

On the following day they were fortunate enough to encounter a party of friendly Indians, who, after conducting them to their village, entertained them with great kindness and hospitality.

At nightfall, Dick was greatly surprised by the sudden appearance of a strange English sailor in the camp.

"Who are you?" demanded Dick.

"You see, matey, I am an Englishman, though at present a naturalized citizen of the United States, and lately able seaman on board a fine bark trading between the Californy coast and Boston.

"We were wrecked on the Pacific Coast. Seven of us managed to get ashore, and the rest went to Davy Jones. We had a few guns and pistols, and plenty of powder, so we wandered up and down the coast, watching for a vessel, but couldn't see any. So we wandered and wandered—through forests and over mountains for, according to our reckoning, a year—and here I am, as mortally surprised to see you as you are to find me in this heathen camp."

"What of your comrades?"

"Two of them is dead, t'other four is about a couple of miles up the river. Tell us what day of the month and year it is, though, for I've lost all count of time."

Dick gave him the information.

"Then it is thirteen months and two days since we were cast on the Pacific shore."

"And you are now within three days' walk of the Atlantic."

"Jerusalem! This will be news for my mates. What port is highest?"

"I don't know of any. But how came you to be away from your friends?"

"Why, you see, all our powder is gone by this time. Sometimes food is rather scarce; so I ventured into this camp to make arrangements with these Indians for a fresh supply of provisions. But how the dickens did you come here?"

Dick told him all about his own ship, the mutiny, and his flight with Alice into the forest.

Dick's new friend informed him that his name was

Stokes, and that he would most gladly take him to his camp and introduce him to his comrades if he so desired.

While Stokes was arranging with the Indians for some food, Alice approached Dick, asking him who the stranger was.

Dick told her all that he knew about him.

"And I think, dear Alice, this will be a very favorable opportunity of joining ourselves with men of our own race."

"But are they nice men?"

"I can't say, but before we come to any decision I will ask him a little more about his comrades."

And Dick drew Stokes a little apart, entering into very earnest conversation with him.

After a time he said, in loud tones:

"Then you are quite sure your comrades will not insult or molest her?"

"I will stake the truth and honor of one who is an Englishman by birth, a Yankee by adoption and of French descent on the mother's side, that she shall be treated with the utmost respect."

"Then we shall go with you," said Dick, and forthwith he announced his intention to the friendly chief who had so kindly entertained them.

So having bid them all a cordial adieu, they borrowed one of the canoes and passed over the stream which ran past the camp, Stokes carefully taking with him the food which he succeeded in purchasing from the Indians.

It was rather more than the hour's walk spoken of by Stokes when a dull, roaring noise was heard up the stream, this sound increased at each step they took.

"What is it?" asked Alice.

"A waterfall," replied Stokes.

"So them swabs as you sailed with mutinied, did they?" he continued, after a short silence.

"They did," responded Dick. "Shot the first mate and I fear will massacre some prisoners they have now, including the skipper, if they are not speedily prevented."

"My hearty, reckon I and my mates are with you. We must ship back to some port, and we may as well ship on board your craft as any other. However, here we are, and as the young lady ain't good at rope-climbin', I'll just hail my mates to come ashore. Hey, there! Sam, Jack and the rest, come along."

It was a strange spot to which the man had taken them.

They were on a level with the top of the waterfall, in the midst of which was an island, small in dimensions and covered with dense bush.

Just where our young hero stood was a gigantic mahogany tree, whose branches stretched right across the stream, and overshadowed the islet.

And from those branches depended several long, creeping plants, trailing down till they reached ground on the little green gem in the center of the waterfall.

In answer to Stokes' hail, a man, sunburnt and ragged, started up, and seizing one of the trailing creepers, climbed up as only a monkey or a sailor could, into the mahogany tree.

The others followed shortly after, and speedily stood by the side of their comrade, our hero, and fair Alice.

Wiry, sunburnt men were they, thin but muscular, clad some in skins of beasts and others in tattered fragments of sailor's clothing.

"Who's this, mate?" asked one, while others began to divide the fool in equal portions.

Stokes told his tale. Dick told his, and the four wanderers appeared satisfied.

Then they began to eat ravenously, and Stokes whispered:

"You and the girl go away for a little time while I just talk to 'em. They'll not harm her by thought, word or deed when they know how much you had to do with getting the grub. When you hear a parrot scream, come back."

Dick took the hint and strolled away, while Stokes gradually led the conversation of the men up to the subject he had to broach to them.

When he had finished, one said:

"Well, if any one does the girl harm he ought to have his comrades' knives scored among his ribs. Let such a vagabond die."

"Hear—hear!" said the others.

"Cross your blades on mine, comrades, and swear by the sacred emblem that you will act as you have said," exclaimed Stokes.

And an oath was forthwith taken—not in such terms as obtains among those who conspire to do evil, but with such solemnity as fits a sacred obligation undertaken by honest Christian men.

That done, Stokes gave the signal to return.

But they came not, and though Dick's new comrades searched for many hours they could not find any trace of him or Alice.

* * * * *

What had become of them?

Dick and his betrothed had, as suggested by Stokes, strolled off together by the riverside.

So entirely absorbed were they in their present happiness and future prospects that they quite forgot all about the signal Stokes was to give till they were far beyond the range of his voice.

"But had we not better return?" said Alice, after a time.

"Perhaps we had."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when he was struck to the ground, while at the same instant Alice was seized and gagged.

"It was lucky we came on this exploring expedition, Isaac," said Mr. Scott.

"Jolly lucky."

"Put them in the boat and go over to the other side. Stop Gordon's mouth with a hank of yarn."

These orders were promptly obeyed by Isaac, and in a few minutes captors and captives were on the water crossing the stream.

They reached a part of the muddy shore, and Alice and Dick were lifted out.

"Is young Gordon sensible yet?" asked Scott.

"Yes."

"Then dig a hole that will about fit him up to the shoulders."

Isaac obeyed, and the ground being soft, soon had excavated enough.

"Put him in," said Scott.

This order was obeyed, and then Scott himself shoveled in the loose earth and stamped it down round Dick's body.

"There, you young whelp! The alligators will come and eat your head off in an hour," he said.

"Jolly good job, too," said Isaac, who held the end of the rope that bound Alice's wrists.

And the brutal young ruffian dragged Alice away, paying not the slightest attention to her moans and sobs.

Scott, who imagined his vengeance was complete, followed, smiling like a fiend at the misery he had caused.

"Cut along, Fitch," said he, "and take your sweetheart with you. If you want a parson at your wedding we'll get

old Jamaica Johnson to officiate. Good-by forever, Gordon."

They disappeared in the jungle by the river bank, and Dick was left to await his fate, whatever it might be.

CHAPTER VIII.

A FEW MORE VILLAINS APPEAR ON THE SCENE.

During the temporary absence of Mr. Scott from the coast, considerable consternation was caused among the crew of the Water Sprite by the sudden appearance of a strange vessel at the mouth of the creek.

On close inspection, however, Jamaica Johnson declared the vessel to be an old acquaintance.

The vessel was a pirate commanded by an old friend, Luiz Cardozo, under whom Johnson had sailed more than one voyage in the West India seas.

Jamaica Johnson jumped into a boat and pulled off to the Santa Maria Del Ore, as Captain Luiz Cardozo's ship was named.

A few minutes' conversation explained matters on both sides, and it was resolved that if Mr. Scott was agreeable to such a proceeding, the two vessels should cruise in company and see what plunder they could pick up along the shores of tropical America.

Captain Cardozo returned to the shore with Johnson, and was formerly introduced to the mutineers.

Much against the wishes of Harefield, it was resolved to set the prisoners at liberty.

And so it was decided that two of the mutineers should conduct Captain Poulton and the rest of the prisoners about half a mile into the forest, and giving them a knife and an axe should leave them to shift for themselves.

This was done.

But until it was done and the two mutineers intrusted with the task returned, Captain Cardozo maintained a sulky silence. He had in vain entered his protest against setting the prisoners at liberty on the good old piratical principle that "dead men tell no tales."

When Scott returned he had little to explain. He had fallen across the wanderers accidentally, he said, and knowing from experience what a slippery chap young Gordon was, and how difficult to keep when captured, had put it out of the power of the youngster to do more mischief.

"He's settled, Harefield."

"That's a good job," replied Harefield, "and——"

"That's a good job," said Captain Luiz Cardozo, smiling blandly on the ringleader of the mutineers.

"Who is this gentleman?" demanded Scott.

And Jamaica Johnson briefly introduced his friend.

"My ship is yonder," said Cardozo, "and these friends of yours have agreed that it would be a good plan for us to sail in company."

"Is yours a merchant ship?"

"No, senor, it is the terror of merchant ships in these seas. I am descended from an ancient and honorable family of buccaners, and am proud to follow the calling of my ancestors. Will you join with us?"

"I will sail with you as your equal, but not under your command. What say you, 'Water Sprites'?"

"We have already agreed."

"That is right. But what has become of Poulton and the others? Are they on board?"

"No, the fools released them," exclaimed Harefield.

"Idiot!"

"No more idiot than you," retorted the man who had spoken first in favor of mercy.

"My very dear senors," said Luiz Cardozo, "gentlemen rovers of the main should never quarrel among themselves, inasmuch as they have nearly all the world to contend against. Now let us consult."

A long discussion then took place, as to the relative qualifications of the two vessels, which were pretty nearly of equal tonnage and armament.

It seemed also that their sailing capacities were about the same.

"But I am short-handed, Don Luiz," said Scott.

"So I have heard from your very excellent friends, and in that very fact you have a signal proof of my forbearance. Had I been so minded I, with my superior crew, might have taken your vessel."

"Not without a jolly good fight for it!" growled Wilson.

"Of course, as the senor says, not without a fight. But you have your vessel, and I will lend you two of my crew to help you to take her to a certain little island, where you will be able to ship a score of stout fellows—English, French, American and Spanish."

"I can do without the Spaniards," said Scott; "I don't think they are such very wonderful sailors."

"I will not discuss that question of seamanship, senor, but I believe it is generally admitted that the Spaniard makes a splendid pirate."

"Well?"

"Well, senor, having shipped your crew, you can remain till I join you, when we will sail together. I must remain here two or three days to fill my water casks, and do a few slight repairs. You, I believe, have done so?"

"Yes, but where is this island? What is it called?"

"My good old friend, Johnson, knows it well—the Island of Gonaves, not far from Hayti."

"I know the place, and it is just as likely a spot to pick up the right sort of chaps as any in the Indies," responded Johnson.

"What say you, mates?" asked Scott.

"I say we'd better get on board at once; we can then run out with the ebb tide in a couple of hours," said Wilson.

"Right. Captain Luiz Cardozo, will you come on board and drink with us to a good cruise?"

"Willingly. May I call my boat's crew now, senor?" he added, turning blandly to Wilson.

"Call the whole ship's company if you like."

Captain Cardozo blew his whistle, and in a few minutes half a dozen sunburnt, tawny Spaniards were pulling to shore.

Cardozo gave them some instructions in his own tongue, and then they all went on board the Water Sprite.

Alice, whose hands were still bound, was compelled to accompany the ruffians, and as she was handed up the side of the vessel she sincerely regretted that she had not fallen a prey to some savage beast.

"She is to be my wife," said Isaac Fitch, with a horrid leer.

Wilson, to whom the words were addressed, replied:

"It ain't likely a handsome gal like that will have a lubber like you."

"She'll have to. I'll tame her."

Wilson gave the young ruffian a blow which sent him rolling on the deck.

"Neither you nor any one else on board the ship shall ill-use the gal!" he exclaimed.

"What, fighting again, senors, and about the young lady, too? I am afraid, Senor Scott, if you keep her on board

you will never be able to keep your crew in order. You had better leave her on shore."

"For you, Captain Cardozo? Thank you, sir. The young lady goes with us; she shall have a cabin to herself, the very cabin she formerly occupied, and no one shall annoy her."

"Ain't I to marry her, then?" whined Isaac Fitch.

"No."

Scott then conducted Alice to the cabin, unfastening the cord that bound her wrists, and then said:

"You had better keep in here as much as possible. There are bolts on the inside of the door."

He left her and returned to the deck, where the men were arranging bottles and glasses.

"Fill up!" he exclaimed. "A bumper to each man."

This command was readily obeyed.

Lifting his glass, Captain Luiz Cardozo said:

"Gentlemen, comrades, permit me to give you a toast."

"Hear! hear!"

"Success to the black flag beneath which we sail, and a merry life to all bold rovers."

"Hurrah!" exclaimed the men.

And while their shouts still echoed in the forest, a black flag was run up to the masthead of each vessel.

"And now a bumper to our first prize and speedily may we win it!" exclaimed Scott.

This toast was also received with enthusiasm.

Captain Cardozo added:

"When you have taken your prize, seniors, you will find it to your advantage not to show any of that softness I witnessed this morning. No prisoners."

"That's agreed on."

"And now, seniors, you had better hasten your preparations. Captain Scott, if you will favor me with your attention for a few minutes, I can give you some very valuable hints how to get fresh papers, bills of lading, and other documents to make you appear the honest trader every one knows you to be."

"Such things are useful, so I am all attention, Senior Luiz."

"You will find them more than useful; they will be your salvation, for the British and American naval officers are the most inquisitive race of beings it has ever been my lot to encounter."

All hints and preparations being complete, Luiz Cardozo returned to his own vessel, leaving four of his men on board the Water Sprite, instead of the two he had first promised.

Then the black flag was hauled down—it was hardly safe to fly it on the open sea with such a small crew on board—and the anchor having been weighed, the Water Sprite stood out to sea, bound on a mission of piratical destruction and bloodshed.

Alice was on board—an unprotected girl, alone with a crew of ruffians.

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER A GAME AT CARDS.

The day after the Water Sprite sailed was a very hot one. The men had been at work all day, some filling water casks, others repairing damages to the hull of the pirate ship, or putting up some fresh rigging.

At sunset, however, they all left off work and repaired to their bunks on shore, with the exception of five whose duty it was to look after the vessel.

As the sun went down, the moon rose, giving almost as much light as the orb of day.

Of the five men on board the pirate vessel, four went below to stretch themselves on the planks and enjoy as much rest as they could in such an oppressive atmosphere.

Of course, they left all the ports open, so that if the breeze happened to wander up the river it might find its way into the vessel.

Sleep was out of the question, so a pack of cards was produced, and the men sat down to pass away the time as best they could till the tide should rise and bring with it the blessed sea breeze.

Two hours passed, and at the expiration of that time all the loose cash of the party had gone into the pouch of one individual who, well satisfied with his evening's work, coiled himself up in a corner to snatch what repose he could before daybreak once more called him to the hard labor he knew was in store.

The sentinel on deck overhead had long since dropped to sleep, and of the men below there were only two who did not sleep.

One of these whispered to the other:

"Ganido!"

"What sayest thou, Domingue?"

"Hush! speak not so loudly. Has not Carlos won every dollar you had?"

"Every one. Blame the cards!"

"Hush! he has all the gold under his head."

The fellow looked at his comrade as well as he could by the soft and mellow light of the full moon, and saw plainly what was meant by honest Domingue, who, for fear there should be any mistake, first touched the haft of his dagger, and then drew his thumb nail across his throat.

"How about Manuel?" asked Ganido.

"Give him back his own dollars, and he will say nothing."

"Well, let it be done."

"But you must do it, friend Ganido."

"Lend me your knife, then."

"Why not use your own?"

The man could not make any answer to this query, and drawing his dagger, approached the wealthy sleeper.

As Ganido approached the sleeping Carlos, the place seemed darkened, and turning to the open port-hole to see the cause, he beheld a sight that filled him with dismay.

Clampering in over the muzzle of a gun was a youth, who held in his hand a pistol, while in his mouth, where he had placed it that he might have one hand at liberty, was a gleaming cutlass.

Ganido dropped his knife and fell on his knees, uttering an exclamation that caused his comrades to start up and clutch at their weapons.

"Come along, lads!" shouted Dick Gordon. "The vessel is ours!"

And he sprang on board, followed by five or six ragged, tawny-bearded men.

Only an instant did the pirate sailors hesitate, then they rushed at the intruders and a fierce fight commenced.

If Dick had been left to follow the herd of his own inclination he would have rushed at Ganido, having seen that worthy pirate in the act of raising his knife to strike down an unsuspecting friend, but he was not allowed any choice in the matter, for Carlos, the successful gambler, had got hold of a landspike, with which he aimed a furious blow at our hero.

Dick dodged it, fired once without success, and then seizing his cutlass began to lay on like a paladin.

"Here, Hepburn, Tom and the rest of you!" he shouted. "Quick!"

The handspike was a heavy weapon, and the man who wielded it was a muscular one, and Dick soon found that he had before him a very difficult task.

However, after some scientific sword-play, he managed to fello the fellow a good prod in the fleshy part of the arm, which caused him to drop his clumsy weapon.

In an instant a long, bright blade flashed from his sash, and Dick, to avoid being pierced to the heart, was compelled to arrest the descending arm of the pirate with his own left hand and wrestle for life.

The pirate was by far the stronger of the two.

He was about twice Dick's age, to begin with, and had, moreover, for years past been inured to toil and danger of all kinds.

A well-built, stalwart man was he, but Dick had learned a trick or two at wrestling and boxing, with which he forthwith endeavored to astonish his adversary.

Of course, it will appear pretty plain to any one that Dick, with his left hand, could not for many seconds restrain the right arm of his adversary.

There was one at hand who saw too plainly the intention of the pirate, and this man, hurling a marlin-spike with true aim, caused the murderous weapon to swerve from its course.

Down came the blade, and a good inch of its point was buried in the planking of the deck.

"Thank you, Tom!" exclaimed Dick, as with a vigorous struggle he freed himself and got the upper hand of his adversary.

By this time the other pirates, including the sentinel who had been sleeping on deck, were secured and Carlos, seeing at a glance that resistance was quite useless, begged for quarter.

Quarter was granted to the defeated villain Carlos, but he was securely bound and bundled down into the hold.

The other men had been dispatched before Dick could interfere to spare their lives.

"And now, skipper," said old Tom Trenail—for he it was whose prompt action had saved our hero's life—"we had better get on deck, or else we shall have all the swarn putting off from shore."

Up they rushed, and were only just in time, for Captain Luiz Cardozo and his men were in the act of launching their boats.

Two guns on the lower deck of the pirate ship bore pretty well upon the landing-place.

Whether loaded with round shot or grape, Dick neither knew nor cared, but finding they were loaded, he carefully elevated first one, then the other, and with the burning end of a cigarette that had fallen from the lips of one of the pirates he touched the priming.

Bang! bang!

One eighteen-pound shot and half a gallon of musket bullets were spinning among the pirates.

One of their boats was smashed by the round shot, while groans and cries of pain told that some of the bullets, at all events, had found their billets in human bodies.

"Load again, lads!" shouted Dick. "Give the villains another dose of grape! Here, this wide-mouthed carronade will scatter it splendidly."

Two more of the guns were loaded and discharged, but this time no sound beyond the echoes of the reports fell upon the ears of the daring party.

Don Luiz Cardozo, and all his men who remained alive, had fled into the depths of the forest, cursing in their hearts the evil hour that induced them to anchor there.

Dick and his friends remained in possession of the pirate ship.

But then comes the question, how did Dick, who was left buried up to the neck by the river's band escape? and how did old Tom Trenail, who was left for dead, when the mutineers recaptured the ship, manage to find himself alive and in fighting condition?

These questions must for the present remain unanswered.

CHAPTER X.

ALICE SINGLETON'S NEW HOME.

About a hundred yards from the pebbly beach which surrounds one of the smallest of the many islands that deck the West India sea, stood a small house at the foot of a cliff, and in the veranda, looking sadly out to sea, sat a woman.

She shaded her eyes with her hand, looking long and earnestly, and then called out:

"Lucia!"

A pretty mulatto girl, aged about thirteen, made her appearance on the veranda.

"Your eyes are stronger than mine. Look and tell me if you see a vessel in the offing and a small boat pulling toward the shore?"

The speaker was Senora Cardozo, the wife of the pirate captain.

After a careful survey of the harbor, the young girl answered that the observation of her mistress was correct.

"What do you think it is, Lucia? Is it——"

"It is not the Santa Maria Del'Ore, that I am certain of, senora."

"Then call Antonio, and be quick about it."

Off darted the girl, and speedily returned with an aged man of her own race, a Spanish mulatto.

"Antonio, you see yonder vessel?"

"Without doubt, senora, and I see it is not the ship of the good Senor Don Luiz."

"Do not let more than a dozen men land, Antonio," said the senora, "and send one of them to me to explain what all this means."

The Senora Cardozo retired to her house and the strange vessel at the same time dropped her anchor.

The boat that pulled off from the side of the stranger evidently contained eight males and one female.

"Who can they be?" was the question that passed from mouth to mouth.

But no one could answer this.

So they were all compelled to wait till the boat touched the beach.

Then there sprang from the stern sheets a man in a naval uniform.

"Where is the Senora Cardozo?" demanded Scott, for he it was who had landed from the ship anchored in the bay. That ship, as our readers may readily guess, was the Water Sprite.

"If you wish to see the senora, I will conduct you to her," replied Antonio. "But do you come as a friend?"

"Ask those men," replied Scott, pointing to three of the men Luiz Cardozo had sent with the Water Sprite, and who had quickly been recognized by many of the attendants.

"As friends," responded they when the question was put. Antonio then made a low bow to Scott, saying:

"This way, noble senor, if you please."

And he led the way to the apartment where the Senora Cardozo was waiting with some impatience to receive her strange visitors.

As Scott entered she arose, and with stately courtesy motioned him to a seat, saying, in Spanish:

"May I ask to what circumstances I owe the honor of a visit from one who is a stranger to me?"

"I have the honor and pleasure to be the bearer of a message from the noble Captain Don Luiz Cardozo, senora."

"Of what nature?"

"I know not, senora, but it is here, in the shape of this letter which I have the honor to offer."

Senora Cardozo took the letter and read it.

"My husband will not arrive for a week, then?" she said.

Now, this rather puzzled Scott, who had been led to believe that Cardozo would follow him in two days.

Some treachery must be intended, he thought, but not being certain, he thought he would try and find out how the land lay, so he replied:

"Captain Cardozo's ship certainly needed repairing, but I could not have thought so long a time would have been necessary."

"Ah, but you are an Englishman; your crew would do twice as much work in a day as those lazy Spaniards, Portuguese and mulattoes."

"The senora does not speak in very complimentary terms of her own countrymen," thought Scott, "and, by the by, her Spanish is not so pure as I have heard at some places, neither is she so dark as a thorough-going Andalusian lady would be. I must keep my eyes open."

"But who is this young lady?" demanded the senora, pointing to Alice, who had been brought up to the house by Scott.

"It is a long story—"

"I already know parts of your story, namely, that you mutinied and seized the ship."

"True; this young lady was rescued from a piece of wreck, on which she had been floating, by the—late captain of the Water Sprite."

"You will find it dangerous to keep a girl possessing such beauty on board your vessel. Your men will be cutting each other's throats about her."

"But what am I to do with the girl?" inquired Scott.

"Leave her here with me."

"I will," replied Scott, "and precious glad I shall be to get rid of her."

"That is agreed on. Does she understand the Spanish tongue?"

"Not a word of it, senora."

The Senora Cardozo rang a bell and ordered refreshments for Scott and Alice, pressing the latter to eat in many a musical Spanish phrase, which Alice could not understand.

She understood well enough, however, for Scott told her she was to remain ashore for some time, and felt quite happy at being again in the society of one of her own sex. At length Scott arose and departed.

When he was fairly out of sight and hearing, the lady of the house turned to Alice, and to her great astonishment addressed her in English.

"Now, poor child, tell me all about yourself, and remember that in Anna Cardozo you have a firm friend."

"Thanks—thanks!" exclaimed Alice, throwing herself into the senora's arms and sobbing aloud.

"There—there, compose yourself, my child; dry your

tears and remember that under this roof no one dares offer you injury or insult."

In a very short time Alice had so far stifled her sobs that she was able to begin telling her story.

When she began to speak of her rescue by Dick and reception on board Captain Poulton's vessel, the senora began to evince far more interest than at first she had done.

"Is Captain Poulton a Devonsire man, my darling?"

"I do not know, senora."

"Describe him."

Alice gave as accurate a description as she could of the captain of the Water Sprite, asking:

"Do you know him?"

"I think so," responded the senora, "but go on with your tale."

As Alice continued her narrative, our hero's name was so frequently mentioned that the senora could not help exclaiming:

"It is very evident that you love this young Gordon—do you know it?"

"I do," replied Alice, blushing deeply.

"Does he know it?"

"Yes," responded Alice, coloring a deeper red than before.

And then she went on to tell how Dick had declared his love, but after that came the more sorrowful tale of the circumstances under which she was dragged away from her lover and brought to the Island of Gonaves.

"I pity you from my heart, poor child!" said the pirate's wife. "But you are safe now. I will see that no harm happens. Now I will show you the room where you will sleep, and I should advise you to take as much rest as possible while you have the opportunity."

In a few minutes Alice felt quite comfortable in her new home with her new friend.

CHAPTER XI.

NECESSARY EXPLANATIONS.

Dick Gordon, as we know, was left buried up to his shoulders and head by the bank of the river on the American coast.

Hour after hour passed away, when the detective heard the sound of something moving in the forest.

After listening he came to the conclusion that it was a human footstep that he heard, and presently a human voice hailed him:

"Hello, my hearty! What cheer?"

And then, as the speaker evidently recognized him:

"Why, Dick, how's this?"

And in five seconds old Tom Trenail was on his knees beside his young companion.

"How came you here, Dick? Who did this?"

"I thought you were dead, Tom. Is it possible I see you alive?"

"It is, though I must say I had a close shave."

"Help me out, Tom, for heaven's sake."

"Of course I will."

Tom looked around, and finding a large branch of a tree close at hand, began to remove the earth from around Dick's body.

It was a task that required some time, for the old sailor was evidently weak and ill: still he stuck to his work with determination and at length got Dick's arms free.

Then Dick was able to help a little, and soon had the pleasure of finding himself at liberty and uninjured.

By this time it was nearly dark, and knowing that Scott and Isaac were so many miles away, Dick resolved to seek the encampment of his new friends and rest for a short time, intending, with their aid, to make an effort to release Alice in the morning.

It grieved him much to leave her for an hour in the society of such ruffians, but without help nothing could be done, and that help would readily be given by the wanderers who had fixed their abode above the waterfall.

"But how did you manage to escape, Tom?" Dick asked, when he had explained all this. "I thought I saw you lying dead on the ground?"

"So them villains thought, and so did not trouble about me, but in the night, the bleeding having stopped a bit, I got well enough to crawl away into the bush, where I hid and rested a whole day, living on a lot of mangoes and plantains I found. The next day I was able to get on a bit, and thought I would try and make for some settlement; so here I am."

Passing the time in explaining all that had happened to himself, Dick conducted his friend along the course of the stream till the waterfall was reached.

A loud shout greeted them, and the wanderers speedily crowded around to know what had happened.

"And where is the young lady?" they asked. Dick told them what had befallen them, and introduced Tom Trenail, who by this time was almost fainting with hunger, fatigue and the pain and weakness caused by his yet unhealed wound.

Food was speedily produced and eaten. Then while one kept watch, the others lay down to sleep and slept soundly.

In the morning, as soon as it was light, they arose and after a hearty meal started on their mission of vengeance and retribution.

They could not travel very fast, on account of Tom's weakness which, however, he was gradually overcoming.

About mid-day they saw, on the opposite bank of the river, some Indians, who were preparing to cross in some canoes.

He hailed the chief, who immediately crossed over and was persuaded to lend the white men one of his canoes, in which our hero and his friends embarked and paddled steadily onward, till they came near the spot where the Water Sprite was at anchor.

Then they landed and Dick, with Stokes, crept forward to reconnoiter.

Great was Dick's surprise to find two ships where he had left but one, and the black flag floating over both.

"What can this mean?" he asked. But his companions could not answer. Scott was plainly visible on the deck of the Water Sprite, and so were the mutineers, including Fitch.

But Alice could not be seen, nor Captain Poulton. Even as they looked, the good ship began to move.

Fold after fold of canvas was unfurled, and the Water Sprite stood out to sea.

Dick, who guessed that Alice was on board, tore his hair with rage and vexation.

He would have followed in the canoe, but the other convinced him that such a proceeding would be rash and useless.

So a council of war was held, at which it was resolved that as the ship that remained at anchor was evidently a pirate, they would be justified in seizing her, and therefore they would make the attempt that very night.

They did so, and with what success has already been related.

"What is to be done now?" demanded Tom, when they were masters of the vessel.

"Up with the anchor, set every sail, and after the Water Sprite," was Dick's prompt response.

But it was low water. There was a bar of sand at the river's mouth that could be crossed only at high tide.

So they were compelled to wait.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TRACK OF THE WANDERERS.

Captain Poulton and his comrades, on being released, set out through the forest in a southern direction.

As night came on they were overtaken by a most terrific storm. In the distance glimmered the lights of what seemed to be a small fishing town or government station on the coast.

Struggling on through the almost blinding darkness, they presently stood before the walls of a little settlement which had been rudely fortified as a defense against the Indians.

As every gate was closed they were compelled to wait till daylight before they could gain entrance to the town.

They soon reached a hotel—as it was called—a low, dirty-looking place, where, after partaking of some refreshments, the exhausted travelers sought such repose as the scanty accommodations of the place afforded.

It was past noon when Captain Poulton awoke, and as he was holding a consultation with his men a couple of brigands in a kind of a uniform entered the apartment and announced themselves as police officers.

"Sensor, you must go with us," said the foremost of the gang.

"Thank you. I am very comfortable here and have no intention of shifting my quarters."

"Matters not, sensor, you and your men must go with us to the jail of the town."

"What does the dirty swab say, captain?" demanded Warren.

"He says we must all go to jail."

"You thundering, snuff-colored son of a sea cook!" exclaimed Warren, advancing towards the policeman with clenched fists, "you lock up American sailors, will you? Take that!"

That being a straightforward blow which sent the policeman rolling on the floor.

His comrades drew their knives and swords, but the sailors made a rush with their cudgels and in a very few seconds cleared the room.

But in ten minutes there came about fifty soldiers of the same pattern as those Captain Poulton had seen at the gate.

A portion of these took up a station at the back of the hotel, part at the front entrance, several others pointed their muskets through the window of the apartment in which the Americans were, while the remainder, headed by their captain, entered the room and summoned Captain Poulton to surrender.

Seeing that the odds were overwhelming, the skipper called upon his men to throw down the cudgels and other weapons, on order they reluctantly obeyed.

Then the sailors were speedily bound, their captors giving them many a kick and cuff during the operation and

marched off to the jail, which, it seemed, was also the court of justice.

"Are these the prisoners?" demanded the presiding magistrate, who, though he was better dressed, did not look a bit more respectable than his police or military.

"Yes, senor, and they made a most desperate resistance."

"Well, now put them in the strongest room the prison contains till I can obtain from his excellency, the governor of the province, an order for their execution."

"What are we accused of?" demanded Captain Poulton.

"Silence!" exclaimed the captain of the military, striking him on the face with the hilt of his sword.

"You cur! if my hands were only loose for ten minutes I and my men would put your army to flight! I demand to know what crimes I and my men are accused of?"

"Murder," replied the magistrate or judge.

"Murder!" exclaimed Captain Poulton.

"Yes, you are accused of the murder of Jose Rufino, a mariner of this port."

"I certainly never heard the name before and never, to my knowledge, saw the man. You will at least give us a fair trial, and allow us to communicate with the nearest American consul?"

"You shall be tried fairly enough, and you die quickly after. For that you may accept the hitherto unbroken word of Don Joachim De Cardozo."

"Cardozo!" exclaimed Poulton.

Then he continued in English:

"Comrades, I fear we have fallen into the hands of some near relative of that piratical villain who entered into partnership with the mutineer Scott not many days ago. If this be the case—"

He would have said more, but the soldiers dragged them away to a cell.

* * * * *

We now return to our hero, Dick Gordon, whom we left on board the Maria Del Ore.

At length the time came when our hero and his crew of trusty friends could weigh their anchor and quit the river in which the Santa Maria Del Ore had been lying, and from which the Water Sprite had already sailed.

The breeze freshened, and the ship flew through the water at the rate of something like fifteen miles an hour.

Evening came on, but before it grew dark he was called on deck.

There were several fragments of wreck floating about, some close to the ship and others so far away that they could barely be discerned with a powerful glass.

"No sign of any human being?" asked Dick.

"Not a sign," replied Stokes.

"Then don't alter our course."

And Dick went below again to light his lamp and continue his writing.

It was quite dark by the time he had finished, and then rising from his seat, he threw open one of the stern windows of the cabin and looked out to get a mouthful of fresh air.

Thoughts of home, of Alice, and of all the varied events of the last six months crowded upon his brain; the strange freaks that fortune had already played him, the uncertainty of his future; the fate of his friends—all important subjects to him—were mixed up in dire confusion.

As he strove to disentangle the threads of his fancy, he suddenly felt his chest clasped by a strong hand, so that he could not make any outcry.

The next moment he was lifted up and pitched through the open window into the sea.

Down—down—down!

It seemed to Dick that he must have gone down fifty fathoms at least before he had recovered himself enough to strike upwards.

And when his head did once more bob above the surface he was quite breathless.

But the moment he could speak he shouted out:

"Help! help!"

Did they hear him?

It seemed so, for the ship's course was slightly altered. But then the helm was put up again and the Santa Maria Del Ore gradually disappeared in the darkness.

Dick was alone in the ocean.

Almost by instinct he swam for some min

Then came the thought:

Would it not be far better to throw up his hands and sink, thus ending a life there seemed no chance of preserving?

"But that would be suicide, the coward's last resource," said Dick, who felt, though, that there was very little chance of escaping.

However, he kept himself afloat till presently something gave him a very severe blow on the head.

He seized hold of the object and found it was a large piece of the mast of some vessel—probably the same they had already seen portions of.

A good portion of the mainmast, much thicker than Dick's body, was floating buoyantly on the water.

It only took the young sailor a few seconds to seat himself astride of it.

Then he sat there, "like patience on a monument, smiling at grief," all through the darksome hours of night till morning came again.

Up shot the orb of day.

But his light gave no renewed hope to our hero.

Around him, so far as his keen eyes could range, nothing was to be seen but a wild waste of waters, over which skimmed the seagull and the albatross.

Hour followed hour.

Still there was nothing but an unbroken solitude.

The rays of the sun scorched him, while a terrible thirst was heating his blood.

Dick felt sick and faint.

"The sooner it is over the better," he murmured, as he prepared to slide from his seat into the unfathomable waters.

But even as he did so he caught sight of something on the horizon that caused him quickly to resume his erect position.

For about a quarter of an hour he shaded his aching eyes with his hand.

Then, in a hoarse and broken accents, he exclaimed:

"A sail—a sail!"

And sure enough there was a large ship bearing down rapidly towards him.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE "GENERAL WASHINGTON."

"Hallo, mate!"

"Ah!"

"Where are you bound for, eh?"

But Dick Gordon, to whom the question was addressed, felt far too ill to make any reply.

He just opened his eyes and saw that he was in a boat containing half a dozen sailors of Anglo-Saxon descent,

and he vaguely remembered that, seated astride his broken piece of mast, he had seen a ship in the distance.

He felt certain that the strangers were friends, so he fainted again without feeling the least alarmed as he felt his senses leaving him.

When he recovered he found himself in a hammock, which had been slung under the shadow of the mainsail of a large ship.

"Water, please," was the first thing he said.

"Why, you have had a quarter of a pint already. You must not drink too much."

"Water, please," repeated Dick, who could scarcely get the words out of his parched throat.

"Well, I'll ask the doctor. If he says, 'Yes,' you shall have some."

The doctor, on being applied to, forbade water drinking, but told Dick's nurse to get him a cup of tea with plenty of milk.

"And if you put a little drop of rum in it I don't think it will hurt him."

So Dick had some tea with a trifle of spirits in it, and found that it did him a great deal of good.

In fact, he was soon able to sit up in his hammock and look about.

"What ship is this? How came I here?" he asked of the sailor who was attending him.

"This ship is the United States brig-of-war, General Washington. We saw you adrift on some wreckage, and thinking this would be a better place for you, fetched you on board."

"Thank you very much."

"Guess your ship came to grief in the storm the other night," said the man who had felt the full fury of more than one hurricane within the past week.

"No," replied Dick.

The man looked disappointed at receiving so brief an answer, so our hero, after ascertaining that the first lieutenant was within hearing, told all his history.

"Santa Maria Del Ore!" exclaimed the lieutenant.

"Why, that is the very ship we're looking for. And you say your friends have taken her?"

"Yes, sir."

"But your late captain; you don't know what has happened to him?"

"No. I fear, though, the villains have killed him."

The lieutenant walked aft and had a long conversation with the captain, who was standing by the binnacle.

He was evidently re-telling Dick's narrative.

"Well, my lad," said Hector Randolph Browne, the aforesaid captain, as he came forward, "we are going in pursuit of the pirate, Cardozo. Will you join us for the cruise?"

"Willingly, sir."

"We will put you ashore at the first port we make, if you like."

"No, sir; I only want to recover the Water Sprite, find Captain Poulton, and punish Scott. I can't do that ashore."

"True," responded the captain, who then began to question our hero as to his knowledge of navigation and seamanship. "Will you take a midshipman's berth for the cruise?"

"I thank you very much, sir, and will accept your kind offer."

"Just so, I thought you would. Here, Mr. Cromwell O. Fairfax, just take Mr. Gordon down to the mess, introduce him, and give him as good a rig-out as you and the purser can muster."

A tall youth came forward and gravely saluted our hero, who in ten minutes' time was fully equipped as an officer in the United States Navy.

And a jolly lot of fellows he found his new comrades.

Dick, after he had his tea, a hearty meal of beef and biscuit, and an introduction to a lot of new friends, felt quite right again, and would have reported himself fit for duty that same night, but the kind-hearted captain would not hear of it.

"You shall begin your duty at six bells to-morrow," he said, and Dick soon after that sought his hammock.

He slept the sleep of the just, reported himself at the appointed time, and had just been sent to his station, when he caught sight of something on the distant horizon.

"A sail—a sail!" he shouted.

Adding, as the lieutenant rushed up to him:

"And I believe it is my old ship—the Water Sprite."

All hands crowded up on the deck of the U. S. brig General Washington to look at the strange sail.

"Is that the Water Sprite?" asked Fairfax, as they gradually drew near the vessel.

"I believe it is," replied Dick; "but if so, the rascals have been trying to disguise her."

"How so?"

"She is painted differently, and they have got a new main and mizzen topsails. Ours were patched."

"All that ship's canvas seems to be about of an age," remarked Captain Browne, who had overheard the conversation. "However, we will carry on, and overhaul the stranger."

All sail was crowded on in pursuit, and it seemed as though the American vessel would overtake the other.

As the day advanced the wind increased, and blew in fierce but uneven gusts.

The stranger was soon obliged to reef in consequence of the fierce squalls and fiery trade wind.

Now it was just in such weather as this that the General Washington could be seen to the best advantage, and Captain Hector R. Browne hailed the fast increasing wind with pleasure.

"Turn up all hands," said he.

But the order was needless, for all hands were already on deck.

"To your stations, men," said the commander, "and be ready to shorten sail at a moment's notice. If you are smart, that ship cannot escape us."

The stranger was a considerable distance to windward, and the alterations in her sails were a guide to the American as to the strength of the wind.

Dick, who watched through a glass, could see her spars bending like bows before the force of the wind.

Presently her topsails were observed coming down, and Dick at once reported the fact to the commander.

Every man was at his post, and the instant the breeze that had caused the maneuver struck the American ship, the topgallant sails were furled, and the topsails down in a trice.

But the moment the passing gust had expended its force, up they flew again to the mastheads, and the upper sails were expanded once more to the breeze.

"This is jolly," exclaimed Dick.

"Yes, it's a rattling good chase," responded young Fairfax; "one of the best I've ever taken part in."

Yet all the advantage seemed to be with the American ship.

Presently the stranger's sails came down again, and were carried away in a fierce gust of wind, and the sail could be seen flapping as though anxious to tear itself into ribbons.

"She is ours now!" shouted Dick.

But the stranger seemed to carry a number of hands, and some of them, in the smartest and most seamanlike manner, bent on another maintopsail, and the Washington's men had just been obliged to take in another reef when the chase was observed to be sheeting home and hoisting away again.

All this showed that the commander of the unknown was a thorough sailor, who knew his ship and how to make the most of her.

"Shake out a reef of the topsails," said Captain Browne, as the wind began to lull. "Blow—blow, ye breezes."

But Boreas was not to be propitiated, and gradually died away.

The stranger held her own, and Dick very sadly saw there was no chance of overhauling her.

The sun declined towards the watery horizon, and finally went down out of sight.

The stranger still appeared to be on the winning side; there was no moon, and the distance was too great to admit of their keeping her in sight when the last vestige of light had vanished.

"Ah, I wonder if we shall see her again," murmured Dick.

"Do you still think it was the Water Sprite, youngster?" asked the captain.

"Yes, sir; but they must have shipped a number of extra men, or they could not have handled the vessel so smartly."

The captain retired to his cabin, and Dick went below with young Fairfax to make a hearty meal of cold beef and biscuit.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SENORA'S HISTORY.

"Why do you look so sad always?" asked Alice Singleton, as she sat by the side of Anna Cardozo, in the balcony overlooking the sea.

"Because I think of the happiness I once enjoyed. Ah, me! I should be happy enough now if my husband led a different kind of life, but every time he sails I fear I have seen him for the last time, and dread to hear that he has been slain in battle or captured by a man-of-war and executed."

"How came you to marry such a man?"

"Child, I knew not when I wedded him what he was, and, having once learned to love him, have never ceased to give him the whole of my heart, for he has been always kind and affectionate to me."

Alice was silent for some time, till her companion said:

"You shall hear my history, if you like."

"I should; I have often wondered how you came here."

Alice settled herself down on the lounge, and took hold of the hand of her companion, who commenced:

"As I have already told you, I am by birth an Englishwoman, and the early days of my life were passed at a pretty little village on the Devonshire coast, where, from my birth, I think I must have acquired a liking for the sea. To watch the blue waves was my delight and pleasure, while nothing seemed grander to me than the same waves when driven to fury by the tempest.

"We were all seafaring people in our little village, some fishers, others working on board coasting vessels, and one or two even employed on ocean-going vessels. These latter, of course, we only saw occasionally when they came home

for a week or two after a long voyage, while the ship was unloading and receiving a fresh cargo.

"My cousin, George Poulton—"

Alice started as she heard the name of the captain of the Water Sprite.

"Yes," continued the senora, "George Poulton was my cousin, and he was on board a ship trading between London and New Orleans. From my earliest recollection he had always been my special playfellow, and as I grew up I began to look upon him as my lover. My father was a fisherman, and at one time a well-to-do man, owning three fishing smacks.

"But when I was about seventeen misfortune began to come upon him. First of all, in the autumn my mother died, and her loss grieved us all very much. Then, in the winter, all three of his smacks were lost, and my only brother, who was on board one of them, was drowned. As if this was not sufficient calamity, the bank in which my father deposited his savings failed, and we were left almost penniless.

"In the moment of misfortune we found friends; but my father was far too proud to accept charity himself or permit me to do so even had I been inclined. He would earn his own living while he had hands and brains, and Providence soon set before him a chance of doing as he was determined to do.

"A merchant of Plymouth who had an estate in the West Indies offered my father a situation, which he unhesitatingly accepted, and in a month or less we went on board ship.

"The first mate of that ship was my cousin, George Poulton.

"We sailed away with a favoring breeze, soon passed the Eddystone rock, and were afloat on the broad Atlantic.

"For a month all went well, but then a tempest arose.

"Six days this tempest raged, and we were driven we knew not whither. On the seventh day the vessel struck on a sand bank, and in the distance, through the fog, spray and blinding rain, we could just discern land—this island.

"Our boats had all been washed away, but the captain tried to build a raft, on which we hoped to reach the shore. Before that could be done, however, the storm lulled, and several boats put off toward us, to rescue us, as we hoped, though we were soon undeceived as to their intentions. For three of the boats boarded us at once, and their crews of armed ruffians at once fell upon our unarmed and unprepared sailors.

"I saw the captain fall. I saw George Poulton wrest a cutlass from one of the villains and lay about him like a hero; and I saw my father, the stout old Devonshire fisherman, with no better weapon than his fists, dash three of the pirates to the deck ere he himself slipped and fell prostrate. Then I saw a broad axe gleam above his white head, and as it descended with merciless force I swooned.

"How terrible!" exclaimed Alice.

"The recollection of that terrible day will never be effaced from my mind."

"But how came you on shore?"

"When I recovered from my swoon, I found myself in one of the canoes, being conveyed towards the land. I sat up and looked towards the ship. One of the pirates saw me do so, and in the English language told me that there was not a living being on board.

"Would to Heaven you had slain me also," I said.

"With a horrible leer the ruffian replied:

"No, you much too handsome to die."

"I swooned again, and when I recovered for the second

time, I found myself in this house—aye, in this very room, with an aged negress by my side.

"Where am I?" I asked, and she told me that when I came ashore the pirates had intended to take me up to their village to sell me by auction, but that Don Luiz De Cardozo, with some of his servants, had rescued me from their hands, and brought me here. In the evening, Don Luiz himself appeared, and entreated me to make his house my home till there was some chance of my reaching an English settlement or England itself.

"Time passed, and still I remained on the island, for the simple reason that no ship came. At first Don Luiz avoided my company, but gradually he passed more and more of his time in my society, at all times conducting himself like a gentleman of refinement and education.

"At length, one day he told me that he loved me, and begged me to become his wife. I hesitated, but I was obliged to confess to myself that I had grown to like him, and at length, as I had no friends on earth, I consented, and was married by the Roman Catholic priest of this island—"

"You are mistaken, madam!" exclaimed a cold, cutting voice.

Both the females turned.

There, in the doorway, stood Don Luiz De Cardozo.

Well might Alice and her companion stare at Don Luiz Cardozo, for the look on the villain's face betokened woe to both. Calmly and deliberately as a judge pronouncing sentence, he said:

"You are mistaken, madam; I obtained a secret divorce. It follows, consequently, that you are not legally my wife."

"Not your wife?" gasped the poor woman, arising to her feet, as a deathly paleness overspread her face.

"Not my wife, nor shall you any longer pass as such. This girl, this peerless girl, shall be my wife, my queen."

The poor, cast-off woman made two steps toward the cruel speaker, and then fell forward on her face, a stream of blood issuing from her mouth.

"Monster, you have killed her!" exclaimed Alice, as she stooped over her prostrate friend and raised her head.

"A sudden death is a merciful one," replied the villain. "If she is dead, she has been saved a great deal of trouble and misery."

He stood calmly looking down on the woman who had devoted her life to him for years.

At length, seeing some signs of returning animation, he rang the bell.

One of the servants appeared.

"See to this woman," said he. "Let her remain here till she has thoroughly recovered, then she must leave the house. She is not my wife, and, therefore, no longer your mistress."

He then turned to Alice.

"As for you, my sweet angel, you shall go on board my ship, and we shall sail to a lovely spot I know, where the priest shall unite us, and you shall speedily learn to love me."

"I will perish rather!"

"You shall not perish, but you shall go," replied Luiz De Cardozo.

He unfastened his sash, and twisted it around her in such a manner that her arms were bound to her side.

Then quietly raising her, he walked, heedless of her cries and screams for help, down to the beach, where his boat was in waiting.

He placed Alice in the boat, and giving the word to the crewman, they were both speedily placed on board a vessel Don Cardozo had taken possession of at Sumatra.

Not until the next day did he give order to weigh anchor and sail.

And even then he had previously sent on shore to inquire for the woman who once considered herself his wife.

The lady was better, the messenger said, when he returned; she would be well enough to quit the signor's house at noon.

Till that hour arrived, Don Luiz attentively watched his house through the telescope.

The hour had struck, when he plainly saw two females, one tall and fair, the other a mulatto girl, quit the house, and slowly walk towards the little collection of cottages that formed the chief and only town in the island of Gonaves.

"She is gone, and that girl with her. Well, they had best both quit the island before I return, or it will be worse for them. Up with the anchor, there, and you may whistle for a breeze if you like."

In an instant all was bustle and confusion, but in the course of a few minutes disorder gave place to regularity, the anchor came up from its resting place on the sandy bed of the ocean, the sails were sheered home, and the trim vessel glided away from the island.

On the day following the departure of Don Luiz Cardozo, the discarded wife sat at her window, looking sadly out upon the sea.

As the sun was sinking in the waves, a strange vessel was seen to come, to anchor in the offing, but the captain of the vessel made no attempt to communicate with the shore.

The senora's resolution was at once taken, and summoning Lucia, her mulatto attendant, she communicated her intention of attempting to escape from the island.

To this end it was deemed prudent for mistress and maid to disguise themselves in male attire, and try, if possible, to board the strange vessel under cover of the coming darkness.

Selecting such articles of plain clothing as best suited their purpose, and hastily dressing themselves, they waited with breathless anxiety the consummation of their plan.

About an hour after sunset the two women made their way to the beach.

There were three or four canoes drawn up in the sand, and launching one, they stepped into it and quickly paddled away towards the great warship.

When Anna Cardozo and Lucia stepped upon the deck, they found themselves under the American flag, and in the presence of a courteous officer, who at once guessed at their sex and demanded their business.

Anna began telling her tale, but she had not said much when the officer shouted out:

"Here, Gordon—Dick Gordon! Come here, lad; this concerns you."

And straightaway our hero rushed upon the deck.

"Have you seen Alice?" guessing instinctively that he was to hear something of his lost love.

"I have," replied Anna, who forthwith related the history of the past day.

"Lost—lost!" moaned poor Dick.

"No, for I know well enough where Cardozo has gone. I heard one of the crew mention the place as he passed beneath my window," said the senora.

"Then send the men to their stations and get the anchor up," said Captain Browne, of the United States ship General Washington.

And the next morning when the people of Gonaves looked out to see if the captain was coming on shore, the ship was nowhere to be seen.

CHAPTER XV.

A MEETING.

Return we now to Mr. Scott, sometime second mate of the good ship Water Sprite, and now the piratical commander of the aforesaid ship.

They cruised about, still keeping somewhere near the course Cardozo might be expected to take.

But some days passed before they saw anything.

At length came, one morning, the welcome shout from the masthead:

"A sail—a sail!"

"Where away?" demanded Scott.

"On the weather bow."

All eyes and glasses eagerly scanned the horizon, and there, sure enough, a white sail was just discernible.

Johnson at once ascended the rigging, glass in hand, to examine the stranger.

"What do you make of her?" demanded Scott, from the deck, when Johnson had taken a comprehensive survey.

"A schooner," replied Johnson.

"Then we'll have another look at her."

The men heard the words with pleasure, and they also saw that the schooner did not attempt to avoid them.

"She's ours this time," said Wilson. "If we don't get her, we ought to go to Davy Jones."

"Now then, Harefield!" roared Scott.

"Here," responded Harefield.

"Take your station at the long gun again."

Harefield at once obeyed.

On came the schooner, without showing colors.

Nor had the Water Sprite a bit of hunting exhibited.

Presently up the main-trunk of the schooner ran a black flag, while at the same time a gun was fired, the shot from which plunged into the water not more than a hundred yards short of the Water Sprite's bows.

"Hurrah! it is Cardozo," exclaimed the portion of the crew shipped at Gonaves.

"It is Cardozo!" echoed the English portion.

But they did not hurrah, for they did not entirely care to sail with him, preferring an independent, roving life.

However, in a few minutes the two vessels were alongside each other, and a full explanation took place between the two commanders.

That day Scott and Don Luiz De Cardozo dined together on board the new ship of the latter.

When the meal was finished, the don opened the subject he had in his mind by asking Scott how he would like to be admiral, commanding the fleet of a recognized state.

"I fear my position would be at the yard-arm rather than on the quarter-deck."

"Not so. You know something of the way in which many of the South American States came into being?"

"Yes; surely seized and formed by men who had brains and hands, but no heart."

"You are right, Senor Scott. I am such a man, and I intend to create such an independent state."

Scott was still scarcely able to restrain his smiles.

"Senor," he replied, "I am at present, like yourself, a pirate, liable to be executed by any regularly commissioned officer into whose hands we may fall. Of course I would prefer to hold a commission myself from some recognized state."

"That we shall do; but you will, of course, give me aid and comfort."

"In what way?"

"Either to overawe or reduce to submission the seaport I intend to make my capital."

"A seaport is but a small kingdom."

"True; but the seaport is the only town for a hundred miles either way, and having secured that, the rest of the country being but thinly inhabited, is bound to fall into my hands. Are you with me?"

"Yes."

"Then in a fortnight I will be king of Samayoa."

"Very good, senor. But I suppose you will hardly require me to go on my knees when you are crowned."

"We will talk about that in the future; but you as admiral will require courtesy from your subordinates, so shall I from mine."

The next thing was to arrange the plan of the campaign, which was very soon done, as Don De Cardozo had thoroughly arranged everything in his own mind.

And then Scott prepared to return to his own vessel.

But as he passed over the side of the Spaniard's ship, he heard one of the crew remark to another:

"The American capitan did not see the American girl that Don Luiz has brought from Gonaves."

"No; is it not strange?"

Scott said nothing, but as he stepped into his own boat he muttered to himself:

"So the fair Alice is on board. Don Luiz is playing a double-faced game, but he must be cunning to circumvent me. It will be his life or mine if he does not give her up."

Scott pulled around under the stern of Cardozo's ship, and his suspicions were confirmed.

Looking down upon him from the cabin window was the pale face of Alice Singleton.

She started back when she saw him, auguring nothing but ill from his presence.

"She shall be mine yet," he thought.

But he little knew that the rescuer and avenger was on his track.

Yes, the United States ship of war, General Washington, was following fast.

Anna Cardozo had heard the fisher people of Gonaves mention Samayoa as the place for which the don was bound, and Captain Browne was steering for it as straight as he possibly could.

"On deck there!" shouted the lookout from his station at the mast head.

"What is it?" demanded Fairfax.

"Two sails on the lee bow."

"Hurrah!" shouted Dick.

"What for?" demanded Captain Browne, who happened to come on deck at the moment.

"That villain Scott and Cardozo have joined company, sir, and we shall have them."

"I hope we may, but don't make too sure lest you should be disappointed."

Every minute seemed an hour, and if they were gaining on the pirates at all it was but slowly.

Yet they were gaining, and the time was not far distant when Dick would engage in combat with two of the greatest villains that ever drew breath.

"Land ho!" shouted the lookout.

"Where away?" demanded Captain Browne.

"Right ahead, sir; them two sails is makin' straight for it."

"Must be some mistake," suggested Mr. Fairfax.

But Dick shook his head, for he knew they could not be many miles away from that same river where he had lost

Captain Poulton; and the captain rubbed his hands, for he guessed the rascals were about to be caught in their own trap.

Presently both vessels tacked and bore away to the southward; the General Washington was as quick as they and flew after them.

"Do you think a shot will reach her?" demanded Captain Hector Randolph Browne, as he paced the deck by the side of the first lieutenant.

"I think so, sir; we have some heavy metal forward," responded the second officer.

"Ready, there, forward!" shouted the commander, and the crews of the guns stood to their posts.

A minute later the report of the heavy gun made every plank of the good ship shiver, as half a hundred weight of iron was hurled towards the Water Sprite.

Every glass was raised to watch the result of the shot.

"At least half a mile short, sir," sang out Dick Gordon, who was as anxious about it as any one on board.

"Try her with another shot, Mr. Buchanan."

"Aye-aye, sir."

Again the great gun forward was fired, and again a great splashing in the water, astern of the Water Sprite, announced that they were not within range, and, in the meantime, night was coming on rapidly.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ATTACK.

On board the Water Sprite all was in confusion.

Night came on, and before them was the light which denoted the position of Don Cardozo's ship, while behind them came the man-o'-war.

Presently Cardozo began to make signals with colored lights, and one of the Gonaves men explained that the entrance to Samayoa was near, and that it was difficult to steer through.

"If that great ship keeps on, she will be wrecked on one of the reefs," said he, rubbing his hands.

But it so happened that Captain Browne had in his youth worked as an apprentice on board a sloop that traded with South American States for logwood, and had been to Samayoa. He knew as well as Cardozo that the entrance to the port was a difficult one.

Both ships, however, worked their way through the narrow entrance, and presently dropped anchor before the town of Samayoa.

Then, and not till then, apparently, did Cardozo remember that Alice Singleton was still a prisoner on board his ship.

He had her landed and conveyed to a private house in the town, opposite the government house and jail.

The owner of the dwelling was devoted to the Cardozo interest, and being told to keep his prisoner safely, promised to do so, fully intending to kill her rather than surrender her charge to anyone.

All this being done, the don proceeded to make his arrangements for defence, knowing that the morning would decide his career.

The Washington cruised to and fro, keeping strict watch that they did not escape during the night.

At length day broke, but in a very lowering, threatening manner.

Dark masses of clouds rolled overhead.

The waves were coming in with a long, steady swell,

which they could distinctly hear breaking on the beach with a long, steady rush, like the noise of a rapid river in a shallow bed.

Looking towards the shore, they could see the upper part of the land with unusual distinctness.

It seemed much nearer than it really was.

But beneath the white clouds were resting upon the waters, obscuring the houses and hulls of the pirate ships, although their topgallant masts were plainly visible.

With two men in the chains sounding, and an experienced man at the wheel, the General Washington stood in for shore, Captain Browne being thoroughly determined to exterminate the villains, for Cardozo's very numerous piracies had already been made a matter of complaint by the United States government.

Presently the fog lifted a little, and those on board the man-o'-war could see what was going on.

The Water Sprite was anchored with her port broadside in position to rake anything that approached, and it appeared as though one or two of her starboard guns had been shifted over.

The schooner was moored so that her guns might enfilade the deck of the Water Sprite, supposing that vessel to be carried by the enemy, and on the cliff, about half a mile from the town, three guns had been placed in position to give the Washington a salute, as she approached by the winding channel leading to the harbor.

Captain Browne was rather surprised at the elaborate preparation made for his reception; but he had not the slightest intention of turning tail.

The wind suddenly freshened, and then came a furious squall, with thunder and lightning, and in the thickest of it the General Washington dashed at the harbor.

But just as she came abreast of the battery on the cliff, she took ground on a sand-bank and hung.

The masts flew forward and bent like fishing-rods, threatening to go over the bows, while the rigging and canvas flapped convulsively.

But the spars were sound, and instantly recovered their upright position with a violent jerk, that made everything on board rattle again.

"Now we are in for it, I guess," exclaimed Mr. Fairfax, as the guns on the cliff opened fire.

"That's all I want," shouted Captain Browne. "I have been fired upon from the shore, and now they shall have it."

He had been in some doubt as to the legality of taking two ships from the port of a friendly state, but when a shore battery opened upon him, he knew he was justified in returning the fire.

Which he did, with a broadside of grape, which drove the pirates from their guns.

But all this time the broadside of the Water Sprite was playing upon the man-o'-war with terrible effect, every shot raking her, while the Americans were unable to get a gun to bear for some time.

At length, by lightening the stern, Captain Browne got his broadside around so as to return the fire, and then a most furious cannonade began.

The Americans had the advantage in weight of metal and discipline of men, but Scott had got most of his guns over to the port side, and so was able to give almost as good as he got.

As for Cardozo, he was here, and everywhere; sometimes on the schooner, encouraging his men, then paying a brief visit to the Water Sprite, and then on shore, which was nearly hidden from view by the dense clouds of smoke.

In fact, the smoke obscured almost everything; but the

progress of battle was announced by the glancing spots of red flame that shot out from the portholes of the ships, by the thunder of the cannon and the sharp rattle of musketry blended with the yelling and shouting of the combatants. The squall had passed, allowing the smoke to accumulate for a time, but shortly afterward came another gust which rendered things visible for a time.

"Gordon."

"Aye, aye, sir!" responded our hero.

"Take a boat's crew, go on shore, and spike those guns," said Captain Browne, pointing to the three on the cliff.

Dick touched his hat and joyfully departed on his errand, for a hand-to-hand contest was more to his taste than standing on deck encouraging the men at the guns.

A dozen men leaped into one of the boats and pulled to a point where the cliff seemed easy of ascent.

As they neared land, the General Washington sent two or three shells whistling over their heads which made the defenders of the guns run.

They did not, however, run away, but hurried down on the beach to oppose the landing of our hero and his party.

A precious ugly set of ruffians they were—mostly of Spanish or Portuguese extraction, but with more or less Indian or negro blood in their veins, men accustomed to the use of weapons, and without scruples.

The boat touched the shore and Dick leaped out, cutlass in hand.

"Come on, lads," he shouted.

And his blade clashed against the weapon of an opponent.

"Ha, ha! welcome, Senor Gordon; welcome to your death," said a voice.

Dick looked up and recognized in his adversary Don Luiz De Cardozo.

"Villain! it is you shall die," exclaimed Dick.

Now Dick had at school been renowned for his single-stick practice, and during his seafaring career had neglected no opportunity of improving his swordsmanship.

Consequently when the Don flattered himself that he had an easy victory, he discovered that he had a very difficult task.

In fact, before a dozen blows had been exchanged, a betting man, if such a person had been present, would have laid odds against the don.

Cardozo was unable to touch our hero, who, however, in less than a quarter of an hour twisted the don's sword out of his hand; but before Dick could follow up the advantage he had thus gained, Cardozo retreated behind his men, and quickly drawing a pistol from his belt, fired.

Dick had been rushing forward to complete his triumph, when all at once, as if struck by lightning, a flash of light blazed across his eyes and he came to the ground with a run, and apparently dead.

CHAPTER XVII.

VICTORY!

When Dick came to himself, he was sitting on the beach from which the pirates had been driven.

For a minute or two he sat slowly recovering from the effects of the don's pistol shot, with one hand holding the torn skin of his forehead, while with the other he cleared away the blood as it flowed from the wound into his eyes.

When he was able to look around a little he saw that he was alone, except that three or four corpses were lying on the beach.

"Spanish pirates, thank Heaven!" muttered Dick; "none of our men seriously hurt."

Then he tried to rise, but that was more than he could do, so he sat still, thanking the Providence that had preserved his life, and looking occasionally at the bodies of the slain Spanish pirates.

But were they all slain, though?

That was a question that forced itself on Dick's consideration in a very short time.

One of them—a tall, dark young fellow, with a jet black mustache, raised himself on his elbow and gazed around till he perceived Dick, when he muttered a malediction that reached our hero's ears.

This man evidently had both legs disabled, but he meant mischief, and placing a long dagger between his teeth, he began to slowly drag himself along on his stomach, ever and again stopping to howl with pain, or vent a curse against the Americano, as he styled Dick.

Our hero was still in some degree bewildered, and partly blinded from the blood that continued to flow down his forehead, where the skin had been torn away by Cardozo's bullet in such a way that a three-cornered flap hung down over his left eye if he removed his hand.

Nevertheless, as he could not run, and would not if he could, he resolved to make a fight for it."

He grasped his cutlass, but, alas! in falling, he had snapped the blade close by the hilt.

The Spaniard was by this time within three yards of Dick, dragging himself along slowly and painfully, but evidently determined to make use of his keen, glittering weapon.

Dick hurled the hilt of the broken cutlass at the fellow's head, but it flew wide of the mark.

Then he drew a pistol and cocked it.

The Spaniard still scrambled onwards, and Dick, with outward coolness, though with some slight inward trepidation, awaited his onslaught, with the tremendous conviction that if his shot missed, his fate was sealed.

If he could have got a good aim at any vital part he would have fired then, but the pirate, as he crept onwards, kept himself tolerably well sheltered by the huge boulders that were plentifully scattered upon the beach.

Presently he was close to Dick, who aimed full at his face and pulled the trigger.

The cap snapped, but no explosion followed, and with another fierce oath, the Spaniard raised himself on one hand, and with the other took his weapon from between his teeth.

Crack!

A bullet whizzed past Dick's ear, the pirate gave a fiendish yell and dropped dead, with his face buried in the sand. "Why, Mr. Gordon, you seem to be having your share of the fun, anyhow," said the seaman who had fired the shot, and who was one of the two who had been left in charge of the boat.

He had seen the very desperate condition of our hero, and had come to his rescue just at the nick of time.

At this moment the remainder of the boat's crew came scrambling down the cliff.

"We have spiked the guns and dismounted them, sir,"

said an old man who had led the party after Dick fell.

"What of the villains?"

"They are gone into the town, sir. I saw them scramble over the wall."

Dick groaned, not with pain, but in disgust at the thought that his enemy had escaped.

"Never mind, sir, let me tie it up."

The man pulled a handkerchief out of his pocket, and having steeped it in rum, tied it around Dick's forehead. The bullet had glanced from the bone without doing any serious injury, and though the rum made the wound smart painfully at first, it speedily stopped the bleeding.

Having taken a dose of the same medicine internally, Dick felt much better, and having been lifted to his feet, was able to walk down to the boat without assistance and return to the ship.

As they were rowing towards the General Washington, the coxswain suddenly started up with a great oath.

"What's the matter, Silas?"

"I'm blowed if the stars and stripes ain't hauled down!"

"Then you bet the skipper's gone to glory, and nine out o' ten of our messmates," said another. "Captain Browne ain't the man to strike anything but good hard blows."

"Don't you see what it is?" said Dick. "The peak hal-yards are shot away, and there goes a man aloft to splice them or reeve fresh ones."

"Bravo! hurrah!" shouted the boat's crew, as bending to their oars they dashed through the waves, anxious to have another inning at the great game of ball that was going on.

"That man will be jerked overboard," exhausted Dick.

"Ah, murder!"

The sailor was seen to fall on the deck of the Washington.

He had been shot through the heart by one of the enemy's marksmen.

Another man ascended, but he had no better luck, and worse than all, the main top-royal mast was shot away.

At that moment Dick scrambled on to the deck.

"Come on board, sir," he said, touching his cap to the first lieutenant.

Then, without waiting for instructions, he seized the flag, and hastily climbing up the main rigging, nailed it to the mast with some of the spikes he had been supplied with for the purpose of spiking the enemy's guns.

"Bravo!" shouted every one.

"You are a brave youth," said the captain, as Dick descended to the deck.

And Captain Browne shook his young midshipman by the hand.

"You are wounded, too."

"Only slightly, sir; I had almost forgotten it. The men stormed the shore battery, and spiked the guns, which they then dismantled."

"I guessed as much. Any casualties?"

"Only three men hurt besides myself, sir."

"Good."

The cannonade still continued fast and furious between the General Washington and the Water Sprite, but the Americans had been unable to get more than three guns to bear on the schooner, although the small-arm men in the tops did good execution with their rifles.

Dick walked to his station, but he had scarcely reached it when the voice of the first lieutenant was heard.

"Volunteers to board the schooner, step this way."

Two score men at once sprang forward, Dick being the first.

"You had better remain here, Gordon," said Captain Browne.

"I should very much like to go, sir, as I believe Miss Singleton is on board the schooner."

"Away you go then."

And Dick sprang into one of the two boats, which immediately started off.

Our hero looked around, and to his intense surprise,

found himself by the side of Anna Cardozo and the mulatto girl, Lucia, both of whom, in the confusion, had managed to smuggle themselves into the boat.

There was no time to put them back.

Both females were armed with cutlass, dagger and pistols stuck in their scarfs, Spanish fashion.

A volley of grape shot saluted them as they emerged to windward from the smoke and pulled towards the schooner.

One man threw up his arms and fell dead; another ceased rowing, for his right arm was shattered, and Fairfax, who sat in the stern sheets of the second boat, was seen tying a white handkerchief around his thigh.

But the men unwounded only redoubled their exertions, and very soon the bowman of Dick's boat caught hold of the stern cable of the schooner with his boat-hook.

"Now lay on, my lads," shouted Dick, as he swarmed up the cable and leaped on deck, closely followed by the blue-jackets.

"Down with them!" shouted Cardozo, urging on his men.

But they had no taste for close combat with these adversaries, and commenced dropping into their own canoes alongside.

The Don started to see Dick, whom he believed dead; but his astonishment increased tenfold when Anna and the mulatto girl rushed at him, sword in hand.

He fired two pistols at them, but his aim was untrue, and then, following his men, leaped overboard.

"Hurrah! the ship is ours!" exclaimed the men.

Anna Cardozo did not join in the cheer, but rushed with her mulatto attendant to one side of the schooner, and fired her pistols at the boat in which Don Luiz was being rapidly paddled to shore.

Dick, as well as the two women, wanted to pursue; but the lieutenant would not hear of it, as the beach of the place was lined with men, who were armed with rifles; besides, he had no orders to do so.

So all hands set to work, that is, all hands except Dick, to bring every gun the schooner carried to bear upon the Water Sprite, where Scott and his men were fighting desperately to escape the hanging they so richly deserved.

But they were outnumbered and outweighed.

Ball and shell went crashing into her hull; half the men were killed, and to crown all, a fierce burst of flame from both port and starboard portholes proclaimed that the Water Sprite was doomed. The men were seen deserting her and hastening towards the shore.

It was the only chance of saving their lives.

"They are all gone now," said the lieutenant, "and the ship will never leave the port."

"Not all gone, sir," said Fairfax; "see, there's one just come up from below."

"It's the villain Scott, himself," said Dick.

It was, indeed, that villain, who had been below to secure some papers, and especially that very document that, unknown to him, had so recently passed into the possession of Harefield.

But it appeared now that he had stayed too long, for all the boats had departed.

Forward, the ship was all in flames, which were rapidly coming aft, and soon the deck grew too hot for him, so he ascended the mizzen rigging and was seen waving his hand as a signal for one of the boats to return.

This they seemed unwilling to do.

It appeared that Mr. Scott must perish in the flames, which were already biting the foot of the mast and devouring the well-arranged rigging.

Up, still upward was the pirate and mutineer compelled to go, as the flame attained the mastery below.

"He cannot escape!" exclaimed Dick.

And even as he spoke the mast fell overboard with a huge splash, carrying Scott with it.

"Gone!" said Fairfax.

"No; there he is up again!" exclaimed Dick, as a few seconds afterwards Scott arose to the surface and began to strike out for the shore.

A boat was then seen coming off.

Scott was soon landed in the town of Samayoa.

He had scarcely climbed up the beach when there came a shock as though a volcano had exploded.

The Water Sprite blew up with a force that shook both earth, air, and water.

Don Luiz Cardozo ranged his forces on the beach, seeing that the American captain was determined to make a thorough job of the task he had commenced, and called upon Scott to oppose their landing.

"I think I can find a dozen or two more men," said he, "if I look up the town; so just you stay here and guard the landing-place till I return."

At the door he encountered his brother, who had been through the town, exhorting every one to resist the landing of the American sailors, who, as he said, had made an unjustifiable attack on them.

"You here, brother Luiz?"

"Yes; is it not here my queen resides?"

"Fool! is this the time to be thinking about a girl, when in a few minutes we may have the town in flames?"

"No man ever yet called Luiz Cardozo a fool, with impunity. Take that for the name you have given me."

The infuriated pirate drew a pistol, and in his blind rage discharged it full at his brother's breast, killing him instantly.

He then opened the door, and rushed into the house.

"Dead—aye, he is dead," muttered the fierce rover; "and she, my peerless Alice, shall die, rather than fall into the hands of those Americans. Ho, there! Alice—Alice! open the door!"

Now, Alice's chamber commanded a view of the harbor and offing, and having seen the American flag floating above the attacking ship, she rightly judged that she would find friends on board.

So she bolted her chamber door, and resolved to let no one in till the conflict was decided.

But the fierce blows of the enraged pirate soon battered down all obstacles, and pistol in hand, he burst into the room.

He seized Alice, dragged her out into the corridor, and would have slain her. But at that moment there appeared before him his disowned wife, and Lucia, the mulatto girl.

Whether the first-named of the two would have made use of the pistol she carried we are unable to say, but she had no chance of doing so; for with a tiger-like spring, Lucia leaped forward and plunged her dagger into his heart.

Meanwhile the lieutenant of the General Washington and his boat's crew had landed in the town, and were clearing the streets of all that bore arms.

"Ha, there is Scott!" shouted Dick; and he at once gave chase.

Finding that retreat was impossible, the villain turned with as many men as he could muster, and resolved to sell his life dearly.

Dick crossed swords with him, and a fierce combat began, and the others knowing that an old grudge was being settled, held to a comparative extent aloof.

But, presently, it became evident that Dick's skill as a swordsman more than balanced Scott's superior strength.

Harefield, seeing this, thought that the best way to restore equality would be to send a bullet through Gordon's skull, so he drew a pistol and cocked it with that intention.

But his movement was noticed by one of the Washington's crew, who in the Western States of America had seen some of the sharpest pistol practice that can be imagined. So he fired—just a second or two before Harefield could make his weapon ready, and down went the ex-usurer dead as a herring.

Just at that moment Dick, with a forward lunge, sent his weapon through Scott's body.

"Hurrah, poor Adams is avenged!" exclaimed a familiar voice, and looking around, our hero saw his old friend, Captain Poulton, with the remainder of the original crew of the Water Sprite, and a merry greeting it was on both sides.

A second shot had knocked another hole in their prison, and they immediately rushed out.

"But, Heavenly powers, who is this?" exclaimed Poulton, falling on his knees by the side of a form evidently that of a female, yet clad in male attire.

It was Anna Cardozo.

In an instant the captain was kneeling by her side.

"Dear George," she said, "I am glad to have seen you once more. Forgive—"

She, too, was unable to utter more; a deep wound had been bleeding inwardly, and though her eyes remained open a few minutes, her troubled life was soon ended.

She died supported by her first lover.

Our tale is nearly done.

Dick recovered from the body of Harefield some papers which put him in possession of a comfortable independence.

Two days afterwards, when the body of poor young Anna had been buried, Dick, Captain Poulton, Alice and old Tom Trenail, and the other men went on board the General Washington, in which vessel they sailed to one of the West Indian ports, and then took a passage on a mail packet bound for New York.

His title to the property was found good, and after waiting a year or two, he of course married the fair Alice.

Happiness has been their lot in their home, which Captain Poulton shares with them.

The pirate ship, Maria Del'Ore, was captured by a Spanish warship, taken into Havana and confiscated to the government.

Several of the pirates were hanged, but Tom Trenail, Stokes and his three companions were honorably discharged.

The old sailor now owns a good-sized fishing smack down on the eastern coast, and at least once every year he and our hero will meet to talk over The Cruise of the Water Sprite.

Next week's issue will contain "BRAVE BRADSHAW, THE EXPRESS MESSENGER; OR, THROUGH BY NIGHT WITH A MILLION."

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CHOICE READING MATTER.

The newest thing in Parisian roguery is the serum swindle, which shows how sharp an eye for the times has the Continental swell nobman. The trick is simplicity itself, and needs nothing more than the materials for making a neat parcel and a certain familiarity with the gay city's easy ways. The operator first finds out some one in easy circumstances who is under medical treatment. Then the coup is made in this way: The operator goes to the door, hands to the servant who opens it a neat parcel with a chemist's name upon it, explaining that it is "the serum ordered by the doctor," and presenting a bill. The amount is usually paid and the swindle is a success. In one district the police have received many complaints from persons victimized.

Police dogs have been such a success that the military authorities in Bologna, in Italy, have tried, with signal success, the experiment of sentinel dogs in the fortress. Where from six to nine soldiers formerly were on guard at night only three are now necessary. The dogs do the rest, and they have been taught not only to keep their eyes open, but they will arouse the snoring soldiers, if necessary. It is said that the dogs will discover what men will pass by unheeded. The intelligence of the four-footed sentinels is remarkable and sometimes misplaced. Recently one of the night sentries was asleep at his post. The dog saw the officer on his rounds in the distance. He was alive to the soldier's peril, and by tugging at his coat awakened him. How is this intelligence developed? Kindness is never lost. A knob of sugar or other delicacy develops the good qualities of dogs in the same way as kind treatment will in many instances.

Some time ago Hugh McGill of Lock Haven, Pa., noticed an old robin fluttering in the grass in front of his home as if it had been injured. Mr. McGill caught the bird after some little effort. He discovered that one of the robin's legs was broken, which rendered it almost helpless. Taking the redbreast into the house he washed the bones, applied splints and carefully bandaged the leg and kept the robin a prisoner. To Mr. McGill's surprise the bones grew together, and a few weeks ago the leg was found to be as good as ever. The robin was given its freedom, but in appreciation of the kind surgical act performed by Mr. McGill the robin comes about the house many times every day and has become so tame that it will eat in crumbs from Mr. McGill's hand. The bird has a nest in a nearby tree and on being called by Mr. McGill invariably flies to him and perches on the vines, a fence or some other object near where Mr. McGill may happen to be.

A description of the new mammoth cave in Europe has been published by Hermann Boch, recently discovered near Obertraun in Austria. The cave is situated under the Dachstein, a mountain in Upper Austria 9,800 feet high. The entrance is at an elevation of about 4,500 feet. Among the characteristic features of the cave is a natural tunnel, at the bottom of which is a river bed six feet deep, formed by an early stream. This tunnel leads to a precipice. Still another feature is a gallery 150 feet high, which leads to a series of stalactite caverns. Like many another cave throughout the world, the Austrian cavern has its dome, 340 feet high, with a cone-like heap of debris 250 feet high in the center. From this central dome radiate a maze of other domes and galleries, many of which end precipitately in dark abysses.

RIB TICKLERS.

"What does C. Q. D. mean?" "That's easy! Can't Quit Drinking, of course!"

Little Elmer—Papa, what is politeness? Prof. Broadhead—Politeness, my son, is the art of not letting people know what you really think of them.

"So your son has finally decided which college he will attend." "Yes; he has found one at last where the professors do not allow the studies to interfere with the athletic work."

Niece—now, Uncle Ned, isn't he just the sweetest little cherub in the world? Uncle—Well, Lucy, I don't know much about human cherubs, but as a specimen of a plain human baby he is certainly a howling success!

Bobby—I say, Mr. Updyke, what do you suppose Clara said about you just before you came in. Mr. Updyke—I haven't an idea in the world, Robert. Bobby (amazed)—Well, you've guessed it! That's just what she did say!

"Yes," said the retired army officer, "I can recall two occasions when I was terribly frightened." "Oh," exclaimed the romantic young lady, do tell me about them. I suppose it happened when you were fighting the Indians." "No," he replied; "one time was when our baby was christened."

She—John, you are a perfect bear about the house! He—Maria, that assertion won't stand the test of science a single moment. A bear sleeps all winter. He doesn't have to get out of bed before daylight every morning to stir up the fire and call the girl. Try some other metaphor, Marie.

He—I wonder what the meaning of that picture is? The youth and the maiden are in a tender attitude. She—Oh, don't you see? He has just asked her to marry him, and she is accepting him. How sweet! What does the artist call the picture? He—looking about—Oh, I see—it's written on a card at the bottom—"Cold."

A butcher-boy coming up Beekman street from Fulton Market the other day, carrying a large tray on his shoulder, accidentally struck it against a lady's head, and discomposed her dress. "The deuce take that tray!" cried the lady, in a towering passion. "Madam," replied the youngster, "the deuce can't take the tray."

A-VILLAIN'S PLOT

By Alexander Armstrong

"Mark Monckton, you are a liar!"

Clear and forcible rang the accusation through the club house of the Crystal Lake Boat Club, Sussex, England.

The speaker was a tall, athletic built youth of some twenty-two summers, straight as an arrow, with hair of a light color, eyes of fearless blue, and a cast of features patrician in every particular.

Harold Maverick was the son of old Squire Maverick, Heath Hall, Sussex.

The Maverick family was an old and highly respected family, ranking among the nobility.

The scene was a gathering of a number of the young scions of nobility in the Crystal Lake Boat House, and the cause of discussion was, as is too often the case, a game of cards.

Poker it was, too, and the hero of this story—I do not like to tell it—held a hand.

But held it with unusual luck, winning steadily, until his opponent, Mark Monckton, the son of Hugh Monckton, a rich gentleman, threw down his cards, and exclaimed in forcible tones:

"Harold Maverick, you are a cheat!"

"What?"

"I repeat it."

"But I never played a fairer game in my life," said our hero, getting a trifle angry.

"But I say you did not play fair," said Monckton, his face purple with rage and defeat.

"Don't say that again, Mark."

"I do say, and can prove it," blustered the other.

"Mark Monckton, you are a liar!"

The scene which ensued was a striking one.

It drew the attention of all in the house. Both of the quarrelers were of good family, and the matter would not end here.

Mark Monckton was in looks, as well as temper, the opposite of Harold Maverick. Dark-browed, and sullen in facial expression, there was nothing of the amiable about him.

"There is my card," said Monckton, throwing a bit of paste-board upon the table. "If you are not a coward you will meet me."

"As you will," said Harold Maverick, grimly, though his face was a trifle pale as he returned the compliment with one of his own cards.

The next morning Harold Maverick, after a sleepless night's reflection, was intensely sorry that he had allowed himself to become involved in this affair of honor, which could terminate only in death or disgrace.

He realized this fully now, and to young Montclair, his second, who was a true friend of his, he confided this emotion.

"I am not afraid of the dog," he said, stoutly; "but I can foresee the consequence quite well. Disgrace or death."

"I will go to the coward this moment," said Montclair, "and make a settlement."

"Never," cried Harold, a foolish sense of honor overmastering him. "I will not flinch. I would win the contempt of everybody."

"I do not think so," said his friend.

"What are the weapons?" queried Harold.

"Rapier."

"The choice was Monckton's?"

"Yes."

"He is an expert swordsman."

Harold strode gloomily up and down his chambers. "At that moment his thoughts touched upon a subject sacred and near to his heart."

A beautiful girl's face arose before his vision. Smilingly, bewitchingly lovely it was, the features of his true love, Nina Montclair, his friend's own sister.

"Vernon," said Harold, in husky tones, suddenly pausing in his walk, "what would Nina say if she knew of this? How I should be lowered in her esteem."

A pained expression flitted across his friend's face.

"Nina would be much pained," he answered, evasively.

Harold Maverick groaned aloud in bitterness of spirit. How he repented his rashness now. Would that he had not played that game of cards, which now threatened such serious consequences.

Harold passed a miserable morning. Then a sudden impulse came to him.

"I will go to Nina," he said. "I will confide all to her, and whatever her advice, I will abide by."

Accordingly, he set forth at once for Montclair Hall. This was a beautiful estate adjoining Maverick, and it did not take Harold long to traverse the intervening distance.

Arrived there, he was about to enter the grounds, when Vernon came rushing towards him, white-faced and excited.

"Oh, Harold, we fear that some misfortune has befallen Nina. She went out on horseback, and her horse has just returned riderless."

"Great Heavens!" ejaculated Harold Maverick. "Get upon the search at once."

The servants of both estates were called out and diligent search made for the young girl. All that day and night the search was continued without avail.

She had mysteriously vanished.

Her friends were distraught with grief and apprehension.

"It is foul play," said Harold Maverick. "Some evil-disposed person has done her harm, and I will track them down or die in the attempt."

The next day Harold sent a telegram to Scotland Yard for Dayton Digby, the great English detective.

The great detective responded to the call at once and presented himself at Heath Hall.

Meanwhile, where and what was the fate of beautiful Nina Montclair, Harold Maverick's betrothed?

She had gone out that morning on horseback and had enjoyed a good canter through the fields, when of a sudden she entered a long stretch of woodland, which bordered the shores of Crystal Lake.

Here she struck into a small bridle path, and followed it for a way until of a sudden her horse shied violently at the sudden appearance of a man who stepped from the bushes at one side.

He was tall and dark-visaged, yet not unhandsome, clad in a long duster coat, and at his heels shambled a gaunt, savage-looking hound.

Nina recognized him at a glance as a man whom she loathed, and felt a fearful repulsion for—Mark Monckton.

Monckton's swarthy visage assumed a malevolent expression as he caught sight of the beautiful rider.

That his appearance from the bushes was preconcerted was evidenced by a sudden leap forward which he made, and a grasping of the bridle-rein.

This brought Nina's horse to a halt, and a flash of indignation to her beautiful face.

"Mark Monckton, this is an insult. Let go of my horse." The villain only smiled sardonically, and, lifting his hat, replied in an insulting tone:

"Miss Montclair—Nina, I must refuse to obey that command."

"Do you mean to insult me?"

"Call it what you will," said the villain. "I want to talk with you, Nina. You do not know what I have suffered on your account. I have declared my love for you once, and you have refused me. Now, I demand your reasons."

Nina Montclair's face turned pale.

"I have told you once, Mark Monckton. I do not love you."

"Ah, you do love Harold Maverick, though."

"I am his promised wife."

"And this is the way you serve me," cried the villain, with a furious oath. "Well, if you will not become mine by fair means, you shall by foul. For mine I have sworn you shall be."

A piercing shriek rang out upon the air from Nina's terrified lips, as she was seized and dragged from her horse's back by the villain.

She made a resistance, but her enemy was too strong for her, and finally she lay back in a dead faint, limp and lifeless, in his arms.

Monckton looked down with a fiendish expression of triumph into her white face upon his arm.

"Ah!" he muttered. "Mine I have sworn you shall be, Nina Montclair. My hour of triumph is at hand. To-morrow the world will see me as the proprietor of Monckton Grange, and I will triumph over this Harold Maverick, have my revenge in the duel, and then, with my wealth, fly to some foreign land with my prize."

He turned, and with Nina's insensible form clasped in his arms, strode along the shore of Crystal Lake for a ways, and then approached a rustic stile set in between oak trees.

And as he approached this stile a man, old and bent, and possessed of sharp features, and clad in a long coat and tall hat, arose from behind the stile and confronted Monckton.

"Open the stile, Fitz Harris," he said. "I have got her all safe."

"Aye, master," and the old man, who was a scheming balliff of Monckton Grange, and a tool of Monckton's, hastened to obey.

"Help me to carry her."

"Where will you take her, sir?"

"To the south wing."

Monckton Grange was an old-fashioned, rambling brick structure, and in a secure chamber of one of its untenanted wings our heroine was imprisoned.

But Mark Monckton's deeds did not end here. The next day the whole country was shocked by the horrible news that the master of the Grange, old Hugh Monckton, had been found murdered in his bed.

And no clew to the assassin was to be found.

A week later.

No trace had been found of the missing Nina Montclair, nor the unknown assassins of Hugh Monckton.

Mark Monckton was adjudged, by reason of a will, master of his father's property now—a wealthy estate.

The Montclairs were bowed with a terrible grief over the mysterious disappearance of Nina. And our hero, Harold Maverick, shared the anguish of the afflicted family.

All efforts to find her had proved unavailing, and the indomitable Scotland Yard detective, Digby, even was non-plussed.

In conversation with Harold and Vernon, he said:

"I have watched Monckton Grange night and day. If Mark Monckton has anything to do with her abduction, he keeps it a close secret."

"I am beginning to despair," said Harold.

"Never say die," said the detective. "Murder will out. And let me tell you a suspicion."

"Tell it."

"It is my belief that the disappearance of this young lady is very closely connected with the murder, and that—"

"What?"

"Tut, tut," said the detective. "The young lady has nothing to do with the murder. But the parties who abducted her have, and I will wager much on it."

A few days after this, Digby, the detective, was in disguise, hanging about a tavern in the little village, near where he observed Fitz Harris, the balliff, enter.

He followed the man in, for he had been shadowing him for some time.

Working his points skillfully, Digby did not have much difficulty in getting the rascally balliff intoxicated, and after which he drew him into conversation.

"My master Mark—hic—has got a soft thing—hic—now," muttered the maudlin villain. "Lots of cash—hic—since the old man—hic—kicked the bucket."

"He didn't care much about the old man's death," ventured the detective.

"Care—hic—that is not Mark—hic. Make it sure. Fitz—hic—sez he to me. Sho I drove the knife clear home—hic—but don't yer tell it, stranger."

The villainous balliff's eyes distended in an idiotic leer as he said this.

"Oh, never fear," said the detective, quietly. "What does he want to keep the young girl locked up for?"

"Humph—hic—I told him he would put his—hic—foot in it, if he meddled with—hic—any dem female—hic. Hope she'll starve up there in the wing—hic. Give us another drink."

With which the very circumspect Fitz Harris keeled over in his chair and went to sleep.

Meanwhile, a later hour the same night, in a dark glade not far from Heath Hall, four dark-clad men met.

Two stripped to the waist, and crossed rapiers in the gloom. Right and left, up and down, flashed the gleaming blades, while the seconds of the duellists stood back, watching the contest.

Suddenly they paused.

"Mark Monckton," said Harold, for he it was, "there is no need of shedding blood. I am willing to grip hands and go back now if you are."

"Never," cried the villain, coarsely. "You are a coward, Harold Maverick."

Again the swords crossed.

But Harold proved the better swordsman. By a marvelous counter-play he disarmed his foe, sending his sword whirling far away among the bushes.

One moment Harold confronted Monckton.

"If I served you right," he said, "I would run you through. But I do not want your worthless life. Go, and never cross my path again."

With a bitter curse the villain turned to comply, when a dark form stepped from the bushes and put a hand upon his shoulder.

"Hold, Mark Monckton, I arrest you for the abduction of Nina Montclair and the murder of your father."

At the same moment, between two constables, Fitz Harris, the balliff, whose confession had disclosed all, was led into the clearing.

Also, Nina Montclair herself appeared upon the detective's arm. Digby had visited the Grange and rescued her, and now she flew into the arms of her true love, Harold Maverick, never again to be separated from him.

The schemers, Monckton and Fitz Harris, met with fitting punishment for their crimes.

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